

SPY

NOVEMBER 1997

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NEW LINE CINEMA





WHICH ONE DID YOU GET?

Once and for all giving the lie to that old "grass is always greener" idea, this issue of SPY has been published under two covers, both of which are so perfectly amusing that nobody starts to "kinda" wish they'd bought the other one a few minutes after purchase.

Gore, '97

Features

THE MEDIUM IS A MESS

36

Disgusting art is yesterday's news, appreciates Mark Kramer. Any "issues" the tax-paying public may have had with artists filling museums with blood, feces, or half a cow pickled in formaldehyde it has largely gotten over. Time for a different scandal: like, how much would it matter if a lot of the more disgusting stuff—Karen Finley's yam suppository, Shwarzkogler's self-castration—never actually happened?

30 OVER 30

44

In line with the morbid theme of this issue, SPY serves up the definitive index of celebrities you thought were in their twenties but who are actually in their thirties. Our point is not that there's something wrong with being over thirty. There isn't, unless you make your living pretending to be a ten-year old on a sitcom. Then you're being *deceptive*.

ARE YOU THERE, GOD?... I HAVE A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE INTERNET

48

Look at the shelves! Look at all the books purporting to address weighty issues of sweeping social relevance—date rape, Prozac, the info-revolution—which, when you open them, hold little more than the college reminiscences of some young, pushy, female Harvard graduate! Toby Young wiggles his hand around in the void behind the ivy.

ROGUE AGAIN?

56

Rogue may or may not be a saucy men's magazine with a past, which may or may not have included articles by Normal Mailer and Tom Wolfe. It may or may not be the case that the newly revamped *Rogue* consists entirely of fawning articles about celebrities and service pieces about extreme sports and how to cure baldness. It may or may not be the case that *Rogue* is contemplating a spoof to try to inject emergency supplies of irony into their editorial. All of this may or may not be true. But we're acting as if it is.

Columns

VICTIMLESS CRIMES THAT HURT US ALL

30

Back pain, social disintegration, and other certain perils of surrendering your seat to an old or pregnant person while using public transport. By Dan Bova.

DEAD MEN WHO COULD SAVE THE WORLD

34

Changing attitudes towards sex and self-fulfillment are part of modern life, but how did we ever convince ourselves that we couldn't find a use for a magic box that gives anyone who sits in it an orgasm? Will Self laments the passing of nutty Viennese psychotherapist Wilhelm Reich, whose discredited invention, the orgone accumulator, would really hit the spot right about now.

Cover Information: Photography by Roderick Angle; hair and makeup by John Toth; model: Scott McNeil/Gramercy. Clothing courtesy of Banana Republic, chain saw courtesy of Gasnick Supply, NYC, puppy courtesy of International Kennel Club, NYC, 212-755-0100. No animals were harmed during the production of this magazine.

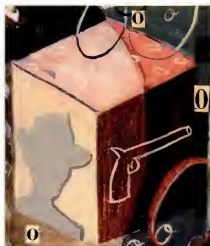


WOLFGANG



WESANO

optic



NOT-SO-NEW STYLES FOR FALL

TOP: Wilhelm Reich's box of high jinks.

MIDDLE: Rock Stars. BOTTOM: The

Nazis being treated as if they were one great big joke in the pages of a magazine.

Departments

CONTRIBUTORS

Body-prints of the people who write for SPY.

8

LETTERS

Letters.

10

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

The joy of taking it easy, Sherlock Holmes style.

14

DISGRUNTLED FORMER EMPLOYEE

Someone who used to work for Mariah Carey pops his cork.

64

Naked City

DIARY OF A FRANK

Just how disgusting is it to visit a sausage factory?

16

HISTORY TODAY

Ancestors of the Lilith Fair, plus the *NY Times* on what's "hip" and what's "funky."

18

SEPARATED AT BIRTH

Plus, the latest news on the Daisy Fuentes Honorary Professorship campaign.

20

READER CONTEST

The inaugural round of the SPY *New Yorker* "Cartoon" Competition.

21

SHOPTIONS!

The new SPY service section that has nobody talking...yet!

22

X MARKS THE COGNOSCENTE

America's gossip columnists ranked by the number of X's in their Rolodexes.

23

CELEBRITY CLOUT TEST

Though dead, Robert Mitchum still gets into more restaurants than David Caruso.

24

GERMAN + LANGUAGE + INNOVATION + STRANGENESS

Ich bin feeling eine kleine strange lately.

25

MURDER ADJECTIVES

When to use "senseless." When to say "brutal." A chart.

26

PARTY POOP

Deathbed dramas.

28

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Their Prints are All Over It

JONATHAN BARRETT

When not reminding children of Dorothy Parker's time-tested adage "Erernity is two people and a ham," Jonathan Barrett ("An Hour-Long Re-Appraisal of the Sausage Making Process on the 119th Birthday of Upton Sinclair," pages 16-17 and "Perhaps Sir Would Like to Wait at the Bar...Until He Dies?" pages 24-25), a safety maven, reaches messengers crucial but forgotten tips, such as "A scooter is for two, not too many!" With this report, Mr. Barrett closes in on his goal of becoming the most prolific voice in the ongoing debate over processed meats. He knows what's for dinner. A resident of the famed "Gateway to Harlem," Jonathan works right here at SPY. Also, his hand is even bigger than the imprint you see to your right. Perhaps twice as big!

PETER WEVERKA

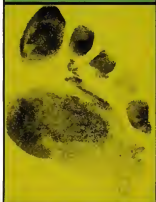
Peter Weverka's ("German Compound Nouns," page 25) glimpse into the foibles of the average German mind with his catalogue of odd compound nouns may well be the definitive work on the topic, but probably is not. In fact, except for a few Teutonic grunts that he got from WWII movies and book editors (Schnell!), Mr. Weverka does not know any German. The San Francisco-based writer is the author of *The Complete Reference: Office '97*, *Dummies 101: Office '97*, and seven other computer books, each with a colon in its title. Hey, it's a living. Peter's humor—nothing related to computers, thank God—has appeared in *Harper's* and the *Esquire Corpse*. This is his first foray onto the pages of SPY.

WILLIAM MONAHAN

William Monahan contributed nothing to this issue but the word "Rogue" (first use, page 56), for which he was paid \$500, making him, quite possibly, the highest-paid freelance writer in history. He is ignorant of the use or uses to which this word will be put. If there is a porn mag named *Rogue*, for example, operating out of a dumpster in Salt Lake City, it is not his problem legally. This is not his thumb-print. So don't go making a cast of it in latex and wearing it on your thumb when you go around killing people, signing for cars, and pretending to be him. Mr. Monahan lives in New York. He will be contributing to SPY whenever he feels like it, and anyone who doesn't like it can fuck off.

WILL SELF

"Will Self™" is a paren-pending method of cleaning swimming pools without the use of either unwieldy equipment or unsightly staff. In the manuals *My Idea of Fun* and *Great Apes*—to be published by Grove Atlantic in the Fall—the "Will Self™" Method is expounded at length. "Dead Men Who Could Save the World" (page 34), Self's column, appears monthly.



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FROM THE SPY MAILROOM

Nobody says "BOO!" anymore, even at Halloween. It's like the way people only say "Ask a stupid question..." and then let the sentence sort of tail out, because they feel embarrassed about saying the "get a stupid answer" part. You can only say "BOO!" a certain number of times in your life before it begins to turn on you.

For this reason, then, as well as for a few telling others, the four walls of this postal way station will be celebrating a non-traditional Halloween this year.

Ah, who are we kidding. There's not going to be any celebration at all. There won't be any laughing or teasing or joking or clapping of hands or repeated dunking of various staffers' heads in the spiked apple cider until they play horse. Not this year. This year is the year the laughter went away. There was the problem of the letter from Robert of Watertown, NY.

Writes Robert, "How about giving us a pleasant boot in the ass with a really sexy and striking cover...a cool shot like one of these knee-to-chest poses." Fairly benign, except for the attached photocopy of a 1977 *High Society* cover featuring the cover line "Angie 'Police Woman' Dickinson Nude!" Working in a mailroom quickly robs you of any "thing" you may have for figures of authority, whether or not they are sitting in one of those sexy and striking knee-to-chest poses.

So that was a buzz-kill. And then came the one from a guy called "RHJ," who

They Squawk Among Us

GENIUSES

Pretty right-on article, "They Walk Among Us" (September, 1997). As long as the numb-minded audiences out there in *Extra* and *E.T. Land* continue to hail celebrities like royalty (and we think the English are askew?), noble specimens from Fatty Arbuckle to O.J. Simpson will continue to, as you say, walk among us.

Rick Conrad
Los Angeles, CA

Kudos to Damon Trent on his insight into the pseudo-private lives of our civilization's artificially synthesized luminaries. His conclusion is right on the mark. The answer most feared by any celebrity to the question, "What is 'fill in the blank' doing now?" is "Who cares?". The currency of fame is now so inflated that the public no longer wants or needs the Sylvester Stallone, for example, but merely a Sylvester Stallone. With enough help from Industrial Light and Magic, that could be me. And my glasses are real.

Robert Sombrio
San Francisco, CA

Relax, Robert. After your reference to "artificially synthesized luminaries," there was never any question about the realism of your glasses.

GEOGRAPHERS

OK Kids, you lousy bastards, time for a short lesson in spelling: Colombia is the country directly to the left of Venezuela; Columbia is the wrong way to spell Colombia ["Janus Gortlieb's Flab-Busting Workshop for Times," October 1997]. Your weight-inspider writer might consider learning Spanish and trying his hand at the original version of the book. Possibly then the iron-pushing nuthead would have a different opinion—possibly not. Oh, one more thing, tequila is Mexican, not Colombian (nor Columbian for that matter). Only in SPY, morons, only in SPY.

S.C. Hindall
Austin, TX

My family has just moved back to a culture where everything American is worshipped. Movies, music, models—everything! It is

maddening! Thank you for being the only oasis of sanity for me in a country where teenage girls run around wearing T-shirts that read, "Beverly Hills Go Happy Nice."

Michio Yamaguchi
Yokohama, Japan

My wife can never understand why I laugh insanely when I'm reading SPY. I figure it must be the German sense of humor...none! Keep up the good work!!

Sgt. Todd Little
Mannheim, Germany
WVMeister@aol.com

Achtung, Sgt. Todd! Sounds like she may be suffering from a chronic case of *NaktPlatz-zurückschrecken*. See page 25.

PEDANTS

Regarding October SPY's "Wearing-a-Suit-and-Bleeding-Slightly-Like-Me," did author Sean Gullette purchase his suit ("a repulsively unwearable ugly combo") at the same place that Johnny Depp [featured in October's "Party Poop"] got his?

Jeff Brown
Chicago, Illinois

The Sept/Oct issue I have states on page 55, to continue "Getting By" see pages 61, 89, and 104. My copy doesn't have these pages. Are you kids high, drunk, or what?

Tina B. Arnold
Whitefish Bay, WI

Actually, none of the above. See, it was a parody of *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, and we were poking fun at the...ah, forget it. You'll get your missing pages in two business days.

SITAR PLAYERS

Young Toby's asinine article "Ban the Bong" [October, 1997] was about as funny as a Conan O'Brien milk ad and about as intelligent as a Dan Quayle speech. To call this bald-headed buffoon's article "trite" and "cliche" is to give it too much credit, though it might have received some applause from a Jr. High D.A.R.E. class.

I am currently serving a five-year sentence



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Now it's our turn.

SNUG AS A BUG IN THE BONNET OF EVIL

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO STAY WARM AND COZY AT THIS TIME OF YEAR.



TAKING IT EASY, AUTUMNAL STYLE

Who knows what treasures lie between the thigh-like cushions of a leather recliner? Whatever they are, they are worth more, by far, than anything the outside world has to offer!

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, months of this sort, are when world-famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes would have preferred to do the bulk of his investigative work. Not that criminals move and think slower as the nights get longer—they don't. Instead, Holmes's preference would have flowed from the importance he and other men of genius place on the abstract quality of Coziness as a source of creative energy.

The London apartment Holmes shared with his partner in crime-solving—the staunch, paunched Dr. Watson—could, had it actually existed, have usefully been preserved as a shrine to Coziness, that uniquely late-autumnal brand of hedonism that gave Holmes's brain its famous glow, its tidal unstoppability. The couple disported themselves upon a pair of overstuffed armchairs, dipped unselfconsciously into a wooden shoe filled with pipe tobacco, and organized their movements around a battered chaise-lounge on which Sherlock could kick back, inject cocaine, play the violin badly, and mellowly shoot holes in the wall with his gun. Even Dr. Moriarty, the Gary Kasparov of crime, seldom stood a chance against the deep browns and oranges of Holmes's soft-furnishing induced peace of mind.

But the modern era has seen a scattering of the cozy tribes. Theoretical feminists, for instance, tend to like things cozy—but in a particular sort of way. They have traditionally taken their cozy-inspiration from Virginia Woolf, with her whole "room of one's own" thing. They lean to snug little garrets with tiny windows for gazing out at the spines of leafless trees. And even today, a large chunk of useful feminist output originates in wooded New England cabins where log fires crackle all year round, flies buzz in the window panes, and anything you sit on is invariably spouting a cheerful plume of horsehair. For a lighthouse keeper, though, both these forms would be unacceptable versions of Coziness.

Cozy people, after all, tend to prefer their own company to the louder joys of group membership. Rarely, if ever, do you see hun-

dreds of dispositionally cozy people clustered in an aircraft hangar, curled like grouting into the grooves of a vast, striated sheet of padded flooring, while ambient sounds trickle from a gigantic speaker. No.

IN THE AGORAPHILICA business of magazine publishing, for this sort of reason, true coziness is hard to come by. When the only reason your medium was invented in the first place was to facilitate unobtrusively the flow of information, to be a short length of intestine in the process by which the world of human affairs goes about digesting itself, what excuse can you conceivably concoct for taking yourself off the field of battle and seeking out some mossy nook somewhere to smoke your pipe? No excuse at all. Unless you're fatally wounded. Which we aren't.

The bush we're bearing around is that this particular issue of SPY has quite a lot of material covering the subject of Death in it. Why? Because it's Autumn. And it occurred to us that rather than brutalize you with endless pictures of women wearing tight brown clothing and drinking mulled wine, we'd try instead to resonate, slightly more tangentially, with what John Keats termed the "mellow fruitfulness" of the season, the rich, ripe overdoneness that is Fall. The back-to-school poignancy of the whole situation.

So snatch up your faithful stick—dear, thick-necked reader—and let's the two of us go snuffle for clues in a big pile of musty orange leaves, or in the personal effects of some kind-hearted, brown-tweed-wearing professor with a heathen's curved scimitar in his back. A thick sweater of fog is rolling in from the expanse of water beyond the docks, and word is only just reaching us of a horrible affair that has just come to light near the houses of Parliament. Quick, heavyset friend, bring your tailored topcoat! And your small gun. And a little drop of something fortifying in your hip flask. For Autumn blood has been spilled, and if we won't take a respectful little peek at it, then who will?

The headlines.
The history.
The gossip.
The auction.

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Naked city

Diary of a Frank

An Hour-Long Reappraisal of the Sausage-Making Process on the 119th Birthday of Upton Sinclair

Otto von Bismark said, "If you like laws and sausages, you never should watch either one being made." Upton Sinclair, for his part, wrote *The Jungle*, a landmark piece of social realism that looked for the fatal contradictions of American society in the disgustingness of Chicago's meat factories. What a pair of gloombags! Sausage factories can't be so revolting that anyone who visits one starts to feel weird about living in a society with other human beings. Can they?—Jonathan Barrett

9:02 AM: Lou, manager of the Empire National sausage factory in Brooklyn, greets me with the observation that he must have been "fucking drunk" when he agreed to give me a tour of his facility. This is a USDA inspected plant; there are rules. I'm supposed to wear boots, an apron, and a hard hat. To the secretary, he asks: "Hey, we got any paper hats for this guy? Maybe a paper hat would do." A paper hat will do fine.

9:17 AM: Lou is showing me the grinder. It is about five feet tall and resembles a mushroom, one with a silver metal stem and a clear plastic cap and huge shark-tooth blades. With a pitchfork, a man named Don feeds animal remains into a sliding slot in the machine. I won't lie to you. From six enormous bins, each containing different kinds of cow part, Don slings flesh into the grinder without precision. Some vats house only suet and sides of beef, things you'd find harmlessly wrapped in cellophane at your grocery store. Other bins are less meek. The first one I notice happens to be

a 6' x 6' x 4' black tub filled with a stringy green mash flecked with chunks of white—like escarole blended with almond chunks. Lou says it is ground beef. Then he shows me an even larger cart with "beef trimmings," which resemble small fish-nets weighed heavy from a catch of flesh and fat. Don digs his shovel into a bin of nameless cow parts that are of a darker and redder hue than the rest of the meats. Of all the barrels, though, the final one is perhaps the worst: pale, thin flesh, tough and cold, stringy and elastic like gym shorts. Cow lips. But this is

sausage making, not taffy-pulling, and such things are to be expected.

9:24 AM: A satisfactory mixture of the contents of each bin tossed into the grinder, Don turns on the machine. It is overwhelmingly loud, and Lou tells me it reminds him of a huge "fucking blender," one that can transform 300 pounds of solid cow pieces into cardboard-colored porridge in five minutes. When the grinding stops, Don opens a chute through which the meaty sludge falls into a waiting metal vat, which looks like a mining cart. This is the product. The heart of the sausage.

9:31 AM: Two men bring vats of proto-sausage into the packing room. The packing machine, the keystone of the room, is made of shiny metal and reaches nearly 11 feet, only slightly below the ceiling. It gives off a rolling purr compared to the grinder, which howls. The packer compresses the cow grindings through ten feet of tubing and expels them into waiting cases. Sausage flows from its bowels like water from a hose, or rather, like mud from a hose, because when the sausage comes out it is thick and rope-like. Lou, my reluctant yet efficient guide, tells me Empire National can process 10,000 pounds of meat per day. At eight hot





dogs per pound, that's 80,000 franks.

9:35 AM: Link cutting: Men feed long sausage lengths into a machine that will cut them and tie them off. The cutter is messy, spraying particles of casing as it forms the links.

9:42 AM: The smoking room resembles a Turkish bath, walls and floors tiled, the air hot and humid. This room is tranquil. It is filled with five gas ovens, which reach from floor to ceiling and burn all day. They have heavy iron doors that lock in place with a hinged metal arm like the barriers at a toll booth. Each hot dog link is hung in one of the ovens and smoked for two hours. Lou jokes good-humoredly about people who use the expression "to cook a hot dog." "Cause they're already cooked. You're only re-heating 'em, not cooking 'em. Re-heating 'em."

9:46 AM: Across from the ovens is the shower room. Cold water courses over each steaming-hot dog for more than half an hour. Five of the six walls in this room are spraying the water, like five Jacuzzi's that someone has shunted together.

9:52 AM: We move into the wrapping room, the most crowded of all the rooms. Eight men work in this dark cube of space. The ceilings are barely seven feet high. One man, in his early 20s with a black beard, is spraying all of the sausages from the shower room with an olive-green dye. During the smoking process, the sausages have developed an interior casing, so the material that has become the *outer* casing must now be removed. The green color-

ing distinguishes unremoved cases ("If the hot dog is green, send it on to the machine!"). The decasing machine lacerates the outer skin and expels it, leaving a ready-to-eat hot dog. From here, it is a quick trip to the wrapping machine and, with the slap of a label, these dogs are ready to go.



10:00 AM: Lou heads back to his office, motioning to the side exit as he goes. My cue. Alone, I regain the world, weaving a path through the loading docks, past trucks pregnant with sausages and hot dogs. Our American political process may indeed be riven with compromises, "lessers of two evils," and stuff like that, but when Otto von Bismarck compared that vague moral turpitude to the out and out badness of the sausage-making process... well, I would like to have some of what he was smoking when he said that.

Mad Props

A Swiftly Underwhelming Planet

The following items of movie "memorabilia"—intended apparently as bait for paying customers—were discovered by the SPY probe *Vacationer* during its month long odyssey to the Planet Hollywood chain of family hamburger restaurants.

A gavel from Pauly Shore's *Jury Duty* • A book cover from *Higher Learning* • Erkel's pants • A folder from *True Lies* • A pair of underwear from *Friday* • A small bottle from *Hoffa* • One shoe from *The Cure* • Plastic model of Arnold Schwarzenegger's horse from *True Lies* • Prop newspaper from *Billy Bathgate* • Don Johnson's loafers from *Miami Vice* • Richard Pryor's sweater from *See No Evil, Here No Evil* • Charlie Sheen's winged parachuting boots from *Terminal Velocity* • Prop gun from *Waterworld* • Don Johnson's shirt from *The Hot Spot* • \$20 gold coins from Mario Van Peebles' *Posse* • Prop shield used in *Hot Shots, Part Deux* • Don Johnson's vest and boots from *Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man* • Dog sled from *North & Flaggpole from Hot Shots, Part Deux* • Lifeguard chair from *China Beach* • A bone from *The Flintstones* • Throwing knife from *Under Siege* • Evil skeleton on a stick from *Army of Darkness* • Tom Selleck's baseball bat from *Mr. Baseball* • Green trousers from *Miami Vice* • Artificial Leg from *The Last Remake of Beau Geste* • Hawaiian shirt from *Honey-moon in Vegas* • Shirt, jeans, and belt buckle from *8 Seconds* • Stunt arrow from Jean-Claude Van Damme's *Hard Target* • Stunt arrow from *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* • School book from *Dead Poets Society* • One-piece spandex uniform worn by "Leon" in *Cool Runnings* • A framed lipsticked impression of a Ron Howard kiss • Garbage-truck sign from Emilio Estevez and Charlie Sheen's *Men at Work* • Sketch of a toy windmill from *Santa Claus, the Movie* • Chris Sarandon's contact lenses from *Fright Night* • Meredith Baxter's High School yearbook • D.B. Sweeney's jeans from *Fire in the Sky* • 5-foot model of the whale from *Free Willy* • Emilio Estevez's pants from *Young Guns II* • A selection of canned goods from *The Beverly Hillbillies*

History Today

Years Roll by... West Fails to Notice

WOMEN IN ROCK

1997: Even in this supposed year of the woman, she says, folks still aren't ready for women who wield guitars like guns. "I was going to all these shows, and I came to the realization that these are rock stars. Why aren't they all over MTV?"—*Village Voice*

1996: Time to call 1996 what it was: pop music's Year of the Woman. While testosterone-fueled bands had their ups and downs, women in rock 'n' roll, pop, country, and folk often made the most dramatic impact in their fields.—*Boston Globe*

1995: It was the Year of the Woman in popular music in 1995.—*Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, MN)

1993: 1993 has definitely proved to be the year of the woman, spawning the popularity of female punk rock bands such as L7, the Muffs, and the Chinese trio Shonen Knife.—*Sun-Sentinel* (Fort Lauderdale)

1992: This is the Year of the Woman in country music.—*Calgary Herald*

1986: It's no secret among pop-music fans that 1986 has been the Year of the Woman on the pop charts, with an unprecedented number of female artists and female-led bands winning top honors.

—*Chicago Tribune*

1984: This was the year of the woman in music.—*New York Times*

1979: The Summer of Love was the summer of liberation...Now women are ready to break out again and for once the industry is on their side.—*Washington Post*

THE CHINESE ZODIAC

1997: Year of the Ox



1996: Year of the Rat



1995: Year of the Pig

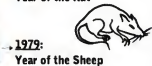
1993: Year of the Rooster



1986: Year of the Tiger



1984: Year of the Rat



1979: Year of the Sheep



Nature of the Beast

No. 20
The Lobster

AN ONGOING GUIDE TO THE ANIMAL KINGDOM'S POWER PLAYERS: "Rest assured, if the shoe was on the other foot, Mr. Lobster wouldn't hesitate to dine on your pancreas. If you could see the lobster on the ocean floor, it would make a beautiful star in a horror movie...Corn has feelings too, doesn't it? And when we cut grass, we chop right through grasshoppers. We are becoming so civilized; we are losing sight of the realities of life."—30-year veteran lobsterman Greg Griffin of Cape Elizabeth, Maine.

Filling "Groovy" ENTITIES THAT
THE NEW YORK TIMES HAS LABELED
EITHER HIP OR FUNKY—JB

HIP

- Beer-drinkers in their 20s
- Smoking
- Ghanaian dance
- Pianists in informal slacks
- Ironic attitudes
- Being Irish
- Male nude scenes
- Gallagher
- B'n'a Jeshurons
- Spanglish
- The Chad Mithel Trio
- Crochet
- Informality
- Being black
- The way our society sees itself

FUNKY

- The drug-related sounds of the 60s
- Drinking
- Mineral aromas
- Down-home backwardness
- City attitudes
- Felt fedoras
- Shamans
- Cafe La Mama
- Luther Vandross
- Cherry Garcia
- Bayfield, WI
- Muscote
- Techno clutter
- Hot Reds
- Plastic shelves from France

TONIC. JUICE. ROCKS. MAGIC.



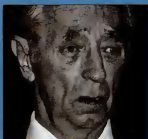
BACARDI LIMÓN

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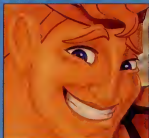
Separated at Birth?



Bundle of moving straw Ray Bulger...



...and mumbling war-movie star Robert Mitchum?



"Failed the kid-test" Hercules...



...and "has the big breasts" Fabio?



White Chris O'Donnell...



...and wife Caroline O'Donnell?

The Dualist Month Autumn Cleaves

The purpose of *Chase's Calendar of Events* and its list of official months is not to cramp your style and guilt-trip you into acting a certain way. Quite the contrary. Consider its listings for October.

THOUGH IT'S...

- Co-op Awareness Month
- National Dessert Month
- Family History Month
- World Chocolate Awareness Month
- Kitchen and Bath Month
- National Apple Jack
- Spirits Month
- National Sarcastics Awareness Month
- Vegetarian Awareness Month

IT'S ALSO...

- Do-It-Yourself Month!
- Dental Hygiene Month!
- Alternative History Month!
- National Orthodontic Health Month!
- Toilet Tank Repair Month!
- National Substance Abuse Prevention Month!
- Adopt-A-Shelter Dog Month!
- National Pork Month!

Don't Need a Weatherman To Know When Someone's Name Blows

It makes sense that piano tuners are often blind and that female gymnasts tend towards the petite. But why do TV weatherpeople sport absurd names made up of non-"name-type" words? Fakes aside, the following list of weatherman names is 100% real!

- A. CLAM DIXON
- B. ROYAL NORMAN
- C. SPUNK DAVIS
- D. STORM FIELD
- E. RAM GROMBLE
- F. TOPPER SHUTT
- G. CARSON WEAMER
- H. FLIP SPICELAND

Storm Field (right) and his weatherman dad, "Frank."



(0.4, 1.4 are non-fake)

Integrity Watch

MTV Veejay in PhD Snub?



University of Colorado at Boulder

University of Colorado Student Union
University Memorial Center 333
Boulder, Colorado 80509-0206

Daniel Saxton

NHK Productions Inc. NY

Dear Mr. Saxton:

FAILED!

Although the University of Colorado and the student body recognize the contributions Daisy Fuentes has made to bilingual journalism and the industry of mass communication, a traditional Doctorate Honorary Degree would be not possible at this time. The University would, however, like to offer a possible alternative to an Honorary Degree, both to recognize Fuentes' achievements as well as satisfy MTV's demographic.

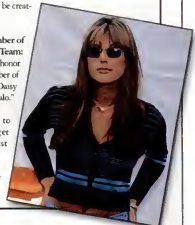
The 1997 Chancellor's Medal: This official University of Colorado award is our highest recognition of achievement. Past recipients have included: Nobel Prize winner Thomas Cech for his advancements in the field of Chemistry, and astronaut Neil Armstrong for his obvious achievements in Space Exploration.

The Daisy Fuentes Latino Scholarship Fund: This scholarship would be created on behalf of Daisy Fuentes' contributions to the Latino culture and would be created to serve Latino college females.

Daisy Fuentes as legitimate member of the University of Colorado Football Team: Coach Rich Neuheisel would like to honor Daisy Fuentes by making her a member of the #1 ranked team in the nation. Daisy would become a famed "Golden Buffalo."

The University would really like to work with you on this. Please get back to our office at your earliest convenience.

Adam Gittins
University of Colorado





Oasis: The two at the front may not know why, but at least they think they know.



Moptopogram

All the Beatles, Right Here, Right Now!

THIS MONTH, IT'S THE NEW ALBUM FROM OASIS, "BE HERE NOW," BOILED DOWN TO ITS FOUR FAB COMPONENTS!

Paulness: 12% Paulness is evidenced by **HAPPY LYRICS THAT RHYME**, "So don't go away/Say what you say/Say that you'll stay/For ever and a day."

Georgeness: 6% Georgeness appears in the form of **SOCIALIST UTOPIANISM THAT RHYMES**, such as "All around the world/You gotta spread the word/Tell me what you've heard/I know it's going to be okay."

Johnness: 8%. The album's Johnness is manifest in **COSMIC METAPHORS THAT DON'T MAKE ANY SENSE** "Look into the wall of my mind's eye/I think I know but I don't know why."

Ringosity: 74% Ringosity is evident in the way the Gallagher brothers come across as a pair of **LOVEABLE BUFFONS WHO DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING**. "Made a meal and threw it up on Sunday/I've got a lot to learn."

The Bulkiest of Tomes, The Worst of Tomes

The art of nonfiction book-writing has been in a tailspin ever since Burton drilled the final period of his *Anatomy of Melancholy* some 250 years ago. True, thinking people still have interesting points to make. And what with the Internet, sexual politics, and other things of that ilk, there are even plenty of things for them to make points *about*. No, the problem with modern non-fiction is the convention of extreme length. To break the talk-show circuit with even a basic idea, an author has to wrap it in hundreds of pages of unreadable padding. Hence the following digests.—*Janus Gottlieb*.

Tony Blair



NEW BRITAIN

TONY BLAIR: NEW BRITAIN

By Tony Blair
WEIGHT: 1 LB,
6.3 OZ

CONTENT: "Oprah, as recently elected Prime Minister of England, I'm planning to make the right decision in every given situation.

The specifics of that situation will determine my decision."

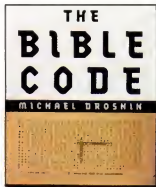
ENTERTAINMENT VALUE OF FILLER

PAGES: Pretty low. Englishman Blair uses multiple fonts just like Dennis Rodman and Howard Stern, but he uses them to showcase statistics on Britain's expanding role in the European community, whatever that is.

TARGET WEIGHT: .5 LB

THE BIBLE CODE

By Michael Drosnin
WEIGHT: 1 LB, 5.9 OZ



CONTENT: "Basically, Gordon, studies show that the world may end soon. Unless we behave."

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE OF FILLER

PAGES: The good news is that Brosnin's computer program reads the Bible as a large grid of letters, much like a common wordsearch puzzle. The bad news is that the puzzle's in Hebrew!

TARGET WEIGHT: 1 LB

LIBERAL RACISM

By Jim Sleeper
WEIGHT: 12.7 OZ

CONTENT: "Gerald, I firmly believe that affirmative action should be, [wait for it], scrapped."

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE OF FILLER
PAGES: None. Page after page of papery background material. All in all, a book even slightly less useful than a piece of paper with "Affirmative action should be scrapped" written on it.

TARGET

WEIGHT: .0001 LBS

SOLID ANSWERS

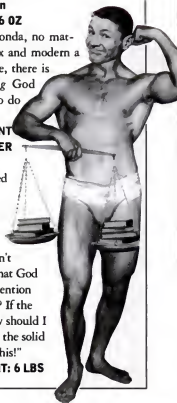
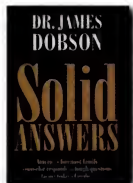
Dr. James Dobson
WEIGHT: 2 LB, 6 OZ

CONTENT: "Rolonda, no matter how complex and modern a situation may be, there is always *something* God would like us to do about it."

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE OF FILLER

PAGES: Huge. Dobson's patented Q&A format covers every single salacious aspect of family life. Who wouldn't want to know what God thinks about Attention Deficit Disorder? If the question is "How should I write my book?" the solid answer is "Like this!"

TARGET WEIGHT: 6 LBS



Rolodex Watch

X Marks the Cognoscente

The lunatics have taken over the asylum. The man at the controls of the airliner is leaking plasma out of his face. Something—and yes, perhaps we will prolong this suspense a moment longer—is rotten in the state of affairs in this once buzzing info-nation. If a series of fact-finding calls placed by SPY staffers to gossip columnists the nation over is anything to go by, the days are gone when a well informed cadre of people in "The Know" had Rolodexes worth rifling through.—*Cara Joy David*

Neal Travis: *The New York Post*
Number of X's in **Rolodex:0**

Michael Musto: *The Village Voice*
Rick X, Martin X. **Rolodex:2**

Ted Casablanca: *E! Online*
"I would never reveal anything about my Rolodex, either sexual or professional," i.e. **Rolodex:0**

Belinda Luscombe: *Time Magazine*
X-Files, somebody who works for Xerox. **Rolodex:2**

Army Archerd: *Daily Variety*
"Three, but I won't say who," i.e. **Rolodex:0**

Bruce Klug: *Playboy*
Xierite. **Rolodex:1**

Jared Paul Stern: "Page Six"
N.Y. Post
Xenon, "some sort of literary thing." **Rolodex:1**

AJ Benza: *E! Gossip Show*
Martin X, "a rock n' roll source." **Rolodex:1**

Press Release Bluff-Call

A Gang Called Hope



WHY IN GOD'S NAME DID YOUR AGENT SEND SPY A PUBLICITY KIT?

Joe E. Tata, ("Nat" on *Beverly Hills 90210*): I have no idea. I stay out of all of that. Remember one thing, as the actor, I know what I do. But

when I have other people, professionals who are my agents, professionals who are my publicists, expertise is what they do. And the deal is: I want to make money. I want to continue to further my career, and I want to do all good, positive, and constructive things 'cause all we read about in the paper is garbage. They never talk about how many terrific actors are out there because it doesn't mean anything. People want garbage. I don't have any garbage to offer, but I do have a whole gang of hope to offer.

"A coke with no ice?" (above) Joe E. in another dramatic *90210* moment.



Royal
Fingerbowl
happy birthday, Sabo!
the debut album
Featuring "Nothing But Time"

W
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Celebrity Clout Test

"Perhaps Sir Would Like to Wait at the Bar...Until He Dies?"

Robert Mitchum, the Hollywood legend, the greatest actor of his generation, is dead. No longer with us. David Caruso, the former *NYPD Blue* star, whose Hollywood career took off like a rocket directly into the side of a mountain, is merely "over." Common sense would suggest that the flame-haired David Caruso, whatever baggage he might be carrying from his career's collapse and his over-publicized descent into alcoholism, would have an easier time gaining VIP access to a bar or restaurant than the late Robert Mitchum. Or would it? As part of its ongoing investigation into the precise composition of celebrity "hotness" or "buzz," SPY rang 'round Manhattan to see which one—the dead one or the "finished" one—is currently hefting the most "pull."—Jonathan Barrett



Round 1 Premier Nitespots Jet Lounge and Jet Lounge East

■ ROBERT MITCHUM

SPY: Hi. Robert Mitchum wants to be put on your list for tonight.

JET LOUNGE EAST: You're sort of last minute, but...how many?

SPY: Robert and four guests.

JET LOUNGE EAST: Um, okay, I'll put it down. Mitchum plus four.

■ DAVID CARUSO

SPY: Hello, I wanted to get Mr. Caruso on the list. I'm his personal assistant.

JET LOUNGE: No, the list is full for this evening. It's too late.

SPY: This is David Caruso, the actor, that we're talking about.

JET LOUNGE: I'm sorry, the list is closed.

SPY: What if it's him alone?

JET LOUNGE: No. Not even then.

SCORE: MITCHUM 1, CARUSO 0

Round 2: Concert by the Artist Formerly Known as Prince

■ ROBERT MITCHUM

SPY: Hi, this is Robert Mitchum's personal assistant. Mr. Mitchum would love to go to the show tonight.

BOX OFFICE: The Prince show? Tonight?

SPY: Yeah, he's really quite a fan.

BOX OFFICE: Um, okay. How many tickets does he want?

SPY: Two.

BOX OFFICE: Robert Mitchum. OK, great! I'll get him something good!

■ DAVID CARUSO

SPY: Hi, this is Mr. David Caruso's personal assistant. I was hoping we might be able to squeeze Mr. Caruso into the Prince show tonight.

BOX OFFICE: Well, you're calling pretty late, you know. I mean, he can just buy one at the door.

SPY: Usually Mr. Caruso doesn't have to do that sort of thing.

BOX OFFICE: It looks like he's going to have to tonight.

SPY: Are you sure there's no way we can work this out? There must be something you can do. David so wants to see the show.

BOX OFFICE: Well...are these tickets going to him personally?

SPY: Of course.

BOX OFFICE: Okay, hold on, I'll check. (Pause) No, he can't go.

SPY: There must be someone else I can talk to. I mean, this is David Caruso. *NYPD Blue!* *Jade!* *Kiss Of Death!* C'mon.

BOX OFFICE: If David Caruso wants to go to this show, then he'll be buying a ticket at the door.

SCORE: MITCHUM 2, CARUSO 0

Round 3 Le Cirque 2000, Self-Consciously Hard-to-Get-Into Restaurant

■ ROBERT MITCHUM

SPY: I'm calling for Robert Mitchum. He was hoping to reserve a spot for four.

LE CIRQUE: Sir, we're overbooked tonight as it is.

SPY: I'm sure. This is Mr. Robert Mitchum though.

LE CIRQUE: I'll tell you... I can squeeze them in at, say, 7:30, maybe they'll have

to wait till 7:45 at the bar.

SPY: No, that's too early. How about 9:30?

LE CIRQUE: That's our busiest time.

SPY: This is rather important to him.

LE CIRQUE: (Pause) Have Mr. Mitchum and his guest come by at 9:30. He might have to get a drink, but we'll fit him in.

SPY: Thank you very much.

LE CIRQUE: Not at all, sir. That's what we do here.

■ DAVID CARUSO

SPY: I wanted to make a reservation for David Caruso.

LE CIRQUE: We're over-booked tonight.

SPY: Really? There's...

LE CIRQUE: Yes, really. We're very full.

SPY: This is David Caruso the actor. I'm sure you know who he is.

LE CIRQUE: How many?

SPY: David and four friends.

LE CIRQUE: No, it's impossible. We are unable to help you. Goodbye.

SCORE: MITCHUM 3, CARUSO 0

Round 4 Private Reception for Tina Turner At Les Célèbrités

■ ROBERT MITCHUM

SPY: Hello, this is Robert Mitchum's personal assistant. I wanted to get him into Tina Turner's private party tonight.

TINA TURNER'S PEOPLE: A first name on Mr. Mitchum?

SPY: Robert.

TINA TURNER'S PEOPLE: Robert Mitchum as in...

SPY: The actor.



TINA TURNER'S PEOPLE: Okay, okay, I'm sorry. That's fine. Fine... I had to make sure, you understand. I'm getting calls from everyone. People saying they want to cover it from the... the *Prague Daily News*, or whatever (Laughter).

SPY: I can imagine.

■ DAVID CARUSO

SPY: I'm calling to get David Caruso into the Tina Turner reception tonight.

TINA TURNER'S PEOPLE: At this time the guest list is closed. I could get your number, but don't expect...Umm, well where is Mr. Caruso?

SPY: He's the actor, David Caruso.

TINA TURNER'S PEOPLE: Okay. Well, the list is closed now.

SPY (*Calling back as David Caruso himself*): This is David Caruso. I'm calling about the party. I want to be on that list.

TINA TURNER'S PEOPLE: Good you hold on for a second. (*Pause*) Okay, that will be fine. Two for tonight.

SCORE: CARUSO 1(!), MITCHUM 4

Round 5 Private party for *Esquire* magazine at Dellwood Country Club.

■ ROBERT MITCHUM

SPY: Hi. I'm the personal assistant to Robert Mitchum, the actor. I wanted to put him on the *Esquire* party list.

DELLWOOD COUNTRY CLUB: Sir, this is a private party.

SPY: Yes, I know, but Mr. Mitchum...

DELLWOOD COUNTRY CLUB: This is just a party for *Esquire* employees. It's an employee event.

SPY: Oh, I see. Well, thank you.

■ DAVID CARUSO

SPY: Hi. This is David Caruso's personal assistant. I was hoping he could get on the list tonight.

DELLWOOD COUNTRY CLUB: It's a private party starting very soon and I can't...

SPY: Mr. Caruso knows it's by invitation only. That's why I'm calling.

DELLWOOD COUNTRY CLUB: This is Mr. Caruso from *Esquire*?

SPY: Umm...sure.

DELLWOOD COUNTRY CLUB: Hold on a second. (*To colleague in background*) A David Caruso who works at *Esquire* wants to know if he can come tonight. Yeah, he says he's...(*To SPY*) Mr. Caruso is from *Esquire*, correct?

SPY: Sure.

DELLWOOD COUNTRY CLUB (*In background*): Yeah from *Esquire*...I don't know why...(*To SPY*) Yes, Mr. Caruso can come any time. It is an *Esquire* party, so...

SPY: Excellent. Thank you so much.

FINAL SCORE: CARUSO 1.5, MITCHUM 4

The Foreign Life

Germans Give Voice to Their Nameless Dreads

LENGTHY "COMPOUND NOUNS" REFERENCE COMPLEX INNER FEELINGS

Stereotypes aside, it turns out, German people really are more profound than the rest of us. Thanks to a loophole in the laws of their language, users have perfect freedom to *invent new words* by stringing together old ones whenever they feel like it. As a consequence, Germans are able to talk about the tiny fears, oblong yearnings, and hard-to-define anxieties that the rest of us can only express through winks and grimaces. The following neologisms are particularly popular.—*Peter Wewerka*

NAKED+PLAZA+CRINGING: When a German meets a member of the opposite sex at a dark, smokey party or crowded bar, makes arrangements to meet again the following day, and then discovers by

cannot withstand a moment of waking consciousness. Thus, the awakener leaves eternity behind and feels instead an urge to piss. The Germans have a word for that brief, second-long interval of total understanding. They call it *DunstEwigkeitZug* (vapor+eternity+whiff).

CAKE+MAN+WARINESS: In Germany, the common ideal of masculine beauty is very similar to the homosexual ideal. That being the case, German women can sometimes feel *KuchenMannVorsicht* (cake+man+wariness), the apprehension that the handsome fellow on the opposite side of the café table is more interested in the male waiter than he is in his female date.

GRANDFATHER+HISTORY+DILEMMA: Imagine growing up in a country where everyone over a certain age is under suspicion of having committed murder. One walks down a pleasant country lane. One comes to a charming village. Four old gentlemen spill out of a tavern. How many Jews, Gypsies, and dissenters did they kill? In moments like these, a young German may experience *Großvater-GeschichteDilemma* (grandfather+history+dilemma), the sneaking suspicion that one is in the company of geriatric killers.

LESBIAN+METAMORPHOSIS+PRIDE: Among extreme macho types, it is a point of pride to be able to say that your ex-girlfriend has become a lesbian. Some men exult in *LesbischMetamorphoseStolz* (lesbian+metamorphosis+pride). There is even a folk song by that name, the final chorus of which has the singers smash their beer steins on the bar.



ADOLF HITLER, LENDING WEIGHT TO AN ITEM ABOUT GERMANS

daylight that the other person is hideous as well as an embarrassment to be seen with in public, that German is said to be suffering from *NakiPlatzzurückschrecken* (naked+plaza+cringing).

VAPOR+ETERNITY+WHIFF: In the brief interval between sleep and wakefulness, every German is a mystic. Having communed with death and eternity during sleep, the awakener understands exactly what he or she is, but only for the briefest of moments, because daylight and its exigencies quickly intrude. Almost as soon as the awakener opens his or her eyes, all is lost. Even the aftertaste of eternity, even the shadow of the memory of being there,

Death-Heads

Make the Adjective Fit the Crime, Just Like the Pros Do!

Each murder, like each snowflake, is unique. One of the jobs of a newspaper reporter, though, is to look at the big picture and be able to tell which murders are "brutal" and which are "cold-blooded," which are "baffling" and which merely "mysterious" killings. While it's true, in most cases, that an intuitive grasp of the nuances of the English language will see a cub reporter through, there are those

chilling moments when the deadline closes in and the mind goes blank. That's when you need this SPY guide to murder adjectives, based on an exhaustive intern-powered survey of recent newspaper headlines. In the world of the hot-metal warrior, after all, nobody wants to be known as the guy who described Jack Ruby's assassination of Lee Harvey Oswald as "horrific and mysterious."—*Ari Vaukys*

LET'S SAY YOU'VE JUST WITNESSED

a crime in which a man was run over by a drunk driver, who drove off laughing into the night. Now you want to write a story about it. What do you do?

STEP ONE: Analyze the brutality and tragedy of the crime. To decide exactly how brutal the crime was, and how tragic, go down the list marked "Brutality," and every time you find a phrase that describes your crime, add the number next to it to a running total. Then do the same for the "Tragedy" heading. This should leave you with two numbers. Since a crime gets more tragic when more people are killed, add 1 to your tragedy number for every (human) victim after the first. For both, you should end up with a number between 1 and 16 (numbers less than 1 become 1, and numbers greater than 16 become 16). In our example, we get a score of 1 for brutality (run over (-2), killer showed no remorse (3)), and 3 for tragedy (alcohol, which turns good people into killers, was involved).

STEP TWO: Consult Chart A. Plot the brutality of your crime horizontally, and the tragedy vertically. There you will find yet another number (3, in the case of our example). Remember this number. You will need it later on.

Chart A

Tragedy	Brutality															
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	30	30	30
12	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	30
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	29	30
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	29
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	27	29
8	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	26	28
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	24	26	28
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	23	25	27
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	21	23	25	27
4	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	20	22	24	26
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	18	20	22	24	26
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	17	19	21	23	25
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	15	17	19	21	23	25
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	13	15	17	19	21	23
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12	14	16	18	20	22
	4				8				12				16			

Brutality

IF...

ADD...

-  Victim stabbed 1-5 times 2
-  Victim stabbed 6-20 times 7
-  Victim stabbed 21+ times 12
-  Victim shot 1-5 times 1
-  Victim shot 6-20 times 5
-  Victim shot 21 or more times 10
-  Victim bludgeoned 2
-  Victim strangled 2
-  Victim slain with an axe 5
-  Victim run over by car -2
-  Victim shot accidentally -10
-  Victim's head severed 2
-  Killer shows no remorse 3
-  Victim sexually assaulted 5
-  Victim's throat cut 3
-  Victim dismembered 10
-  Victim gutted like a fish 9
-  Victim homeless / refugee 4

Tragedy

-  Alcohol somehow involved 3
-  Victim was a child 10
-  Victim was an animal -3
-  Victim related to killer 10
-  Victim trying to stop a crime 4
-  Surviving children looked on 8
-  Victim just about to retire 1
-  Victim eulogized by celebrities 3
-  Victim 60-99 years old 3
-  Victim 100 or more years old 6
-  Victim homeless/refugee 3

Chart B

STEP THREE: Analyze the strangeness of the crime. Use the list below to figure out how strange, unsettling and weird the crime is. This number should be between 1 and 30 (again, round accordingly if it isn't). In the case of our example, the strangeness is 3 (because the killer is still at large).

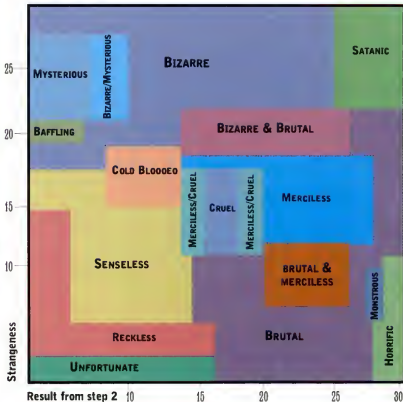
STEP FOUR: Consult Chart B. Now you're ready to determine your murder adjective! Plot your result from Chart A horizontally, and your "strangeness" result vertically. In our sample crime, we'd have the coordinate (3,3). And voila! The crime you witnessed was "reckless."

Strangeness

IF... ADD...

-  Victim non-American -2
-  Victim stabbed 21+ times 2
-  Large sums of money involved 2
-  The Devil somehow involved 20
-  Aliens possibly involved 20
-  Mafia/gangs somehow involved -1
-  Killer motivated by racism 4
-  Killer motivated by religion 2*
-  Killer still at large 2
-  The government was in on it 5
-  Killer arrested, later released 4
-  Note stuffed in victim's mouth 5
-  Killer was a child 5
-  Victim friends with killer 2
-  Victim wore peculiar clothes 4
-  Killer pleads insanity 2
-  Silence of the Lambs invoked 10
-  Robbery was a motive -3
-  Victim was a celebrity 7
-  Victim was a member of a cult 3
-  Victim was homeless/refugee -5
-  Victim influenced by B-movies 9
-  Victim killed with odd weapon 2
-  Victim eaten by killer 4

* add 5 if this particular religion worships the Devil, or if the religion in question is a Cult.



Now You Try! We'll do the first one to get you started, but now you can take actual crimes and match them to their adjectives with nearly 100% accuracy. Try these:

A. A famous Italian fashion-designer is shot twice in the head by a psychopath with whom he was friendly.



SENSELESS

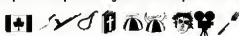
B. Nine rabbits and a chicken were killed, apparently with an ice pick, and arranged in a circle. Autopsies reveal that the rabbits were freakishly exsanguinated: completely devoid of blood. There was no blood at the crime scene.



C. A famous athlete kills his ex-wife and her lover, is found innocent of the crime, and signs a major book deal.



D. Inspired by the Bible and the movie *Warlock*, a 14-year-old boy and his 8-year-old accomplice stabbed, bludgeoned, and strangled a 7-year-old Canadian boy, then cut off his skin and put it in a potion to give them the power of flight.



E. A 17-year-old boy stabbed his mother 10 times with a knife, struck her with an axe, and hacked at her with a hatchet. Then he shot his father three times, cut off his head with a hacksaw, and used it in a ritual "to better himself in the eyes of the Devil."



SOURCES: Boston Herald, New York Times, Tampa Tribune, Arizona Republic, Fresno Bee, Greenboro News & Record, Washington Post, Raleigh News and Observer, Plain Dealer, Mainichi Daily News, Chicago Tribune, San Diego Union-Tribune, People, New York Post, Guardian, New Straights Times, Newday, Orange County Register, Associated Press, South China Morning Post, Evening Standard, FT Asia Intelligence Wire, Record, Miami Times, Daily Telegraph, Daily Record, and the Wall Street Journal

PARTY POOP

"DEATHBED DRAMA" EDITION



6



5



1 "I'M GOING TO JOIN JIMI AND JANIS!" Underweight and shockingly wizened, Rolling Stone **Mick Jagger** bravely prepares to cloak himself in moss!

1

2 "I CAN'T EAT . . . BUT I MUST!" Keith Flint from Prodigy deploys some serious hardware in his brave battle with anorexia!

2

3 "DON'T CRY FOR ME, THOUGH I'M TEENY!" Brave songbird **Madonna** is a sickly crumb of her former self!

3



4

4 A TIME FOR TEARS, NOT LAUGHTER! **Cuba Gooding Jr.** shares news of his terminal abdominalitis with shallow Hollywood cronies.

5 ASHES TO ASHES, SPICE TO SPICE . . . Flesh necrotizing at an inch every hour, a radiant **Emma Burton** savors some fond, brave memories!

6 "THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME!" Unable to face the Reaper with dignity, a not-so-brave **Princess Stephanie** does the next best thing.



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STANDING BULL

THE SIMPLE ACT OF
OFFERING ONE'S SEAT TO THE ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED
AND HOW IT DESTROYS CIVILIZATION. BY DAN BOVA

"P

ardon me sir, but would it be okay if my wife took your seat?" The words, pleading but assured, floated gently down the canals of my ears, through my brain and into what must have been my stomach, because I began to feel queasy. The words were a

command disguised as a request, but they might as well have been sour

cream wrapped in a twinkie.

It had been a vaguely peaceful ride home on a packed New York subway, despite its beginning. I had been forced to share a sticky handrail with an alarmingly fat man wearing sweatpants and a mesh tanktop while staving off the advances of a Chinese man selling squawking, clapping electronic robots. Unlike most rides, where I would eventually become so enchanted by the robot's sweet chirpings that I'd attempt to strangle one, today's ended with a blessing. Someone had gotten off the train, leaving me his seat. Underneath the watchful eyes of a mass-market dermatologist named Dr. Z and his skin-peeling assistants, I sat mentally, physically, utterly pain-free.

And then it happened. *They* got on board. A pregnant couple. She pregnant with child, and he with the notion that anyone not directly related to them gave a shit.

I began rhythmically bobbing my head, hoping he'd think I was wearing a walkman and grooving to my favorite track, and move on. "Sir? Can she have your seat?" Obviously he wasn't a music lover. This guy was moving nowhere. He waited for my answer. I took a deep breath.

"You know what? It would actually not be okay. It would in

fact be *unokay*. Every time I finally get a seat, people like you come along and expect me to just give it up. Are you given license to *steal* my seat because the condom broke?" I thought to myself in a hushed, whispery Jack Palance-like voice in case it leaked out my ears. But as the answer had not in fact leaked out my ears, he was still waiting for my reply.

I took another deep breath and uttered these three words: "Sure, no problem."

I stood back up and re-grappled the

handrail, whereupon I noticed an upright elderly woman whose gaze fell longingly on the seat I had just forfeited and then turned to me filled with bitter, burning hatred. My brain began throbbing in time with my feet. Within seconds, I went from comfortable passenger, to victim, to victimizer. As *New York Times* columnist Michiko Kakutani would say, "What's going on here?" I swallowed my anger and confusion until I got home, where I viciously shortchanged the dog, only playing "gotgetheball!" for about fifteen minutes. I was in an utter state of anomie. So I decided to go for a walk.

WALKING ALONG THE STINKY

shores of the East River, I began to think that somewhere along society's road to enlightenment, the Politeness Fascist poisoned the well of thought with the notion that it is a noble and necessary act to give up our seats. The Metropolitan Transit Authority in New York City has gone so far as to place "reserved" stickers on choice bus seats and has enlisted the help

of the internet—or something—to run electronic message boards in subway stations whose glowing pixilated letters request, "Please give up your seat to the elderly and handicapped." (This incidentally, is the same group that puts up signs begging travelers not to give loose change to the homeless: Give your seat to Grandpa Joe, but please don't feed him.)

But what this campaign fails to take into account is the extent to which need-to-sit-ness is clearly a subjective matter. There are many factors and sub-factors that must be factored in when deciding whose comfort should come before our own. If we don't get this straight, I thought to myself, we will continue on in darkness, confused and bewildered, angrily disappointing puppies.

I paused along my walk to



JOHN UELAND

witness an elderly chap, feeding bread crusts and speaking Russian to a bunch of pigeons. Old age with all its bells and whistles was at one point in history considered an inevitable tragic fate, I thought, which automatically earned you respect, in the form of a chair. If you were elderly you were assumed to be in a constant state of pain, regardless of whether your hip was actually broken, made of a synthetic substance, or doing just fine.

But thanks to advances in medical technology, medical thinking has evolved. "Old age" is now thought of as a disease. How old you are involves a calculation of the number of diseases and ailments that have invaded your body and how treatable they are. Blanketing the entire elderly population as infirm and unable to stand is no more PC than it is true. Go to any McDonald's an hour or so before it opens, say 4 A.M., and you'll find a small squadron of geriatrics lined up at the door with coffee coupons and senior discount cards clutched in their weather-beaten hands. The same goes outside Caldor, K-Mart, and the like (minus, of course, the coffee coupons). Trust me, I've worked at these places.

So how is an older gentleman who has lived through two world wars and childhood summer vacations in an iron lung meant to feel when some chubby-legged Nintendo-bred ninny offers him his seat on the subway? Besides just plain condescended to, he probably feels like he's lead to be put to sleep.

And when the MTA says "elderly," how old exactly are we talking? 50? 60? 70? 40? When will that pimply faced need be old enough to expect seats to be offered to him? When he *feels* old enough? So then people start assuming traits, which previously would have been hindrances to them, they now feel society will reward. The young declare themselves old. Cats start eating dogs. It's helter skelter.

Pausing to sweat in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge, I realized this gray scale also fogs things up when considering pregnant commuters. How pregnant do you have to be to be in real physical need of someone's seat? Three months? Six months? What about a woman carrying a little white stick with a pink plus sign on it? Should she get my seat? Spend more than a minute eyeing a woman's profile to determine her stage of pregnancy (and if she's fit to be a mother in the first place), and you'll get an eye-ful of pepper spray stat. And in this day and age of power-suited white-sneaker-wearing women (both pregnant and unpregnant), finally cracking the glass ceiling in corporate America, the offering of a seat is nothing more than an outdated act of chivalry. "Must be tough working up there with the big boys, eh sweetcakes? Here,

take my seat. I'm a man, I can take it."

And to continue this line of thought, how disabled do you have to be to deserve an able-bodied person's seat? Do you have to be missing a limb? How about a finger? What if you have an *extra* finger? What about that guy that is waddling down the aisle? Is he suffering from a pronounced limp or is he trying to remove some subway pudding from the bottom of his shoe? Who can be sure?

YES, THESE ARE SLIGHT exaggerations of the everyday makeup of a crowded bus or train, but the point is: if we are to spend our entire commutes sizing up our fellow passengers in terms of health and fitness, eventually we'll stop seeing them as living breathing human beings. That person who just got on board is no longer an old Italian woman traveling to Mulberry Street with a bag of groceries to share a recipe with her grandchildren that dates back to nineteenth century Sicily. Now it is a glob of papery epidermal fiber supported by brittle femurs in the proximity of a bag of crap that may itself start demanding a seat if its bottom starts to give.

Learning to pass judgment on fellow human beings' worth based solely on physical attributes leads only to things like pogroms and death marches. And what about the situation I experienced that started off this rant? What happens when a woman whose water seems to be on the verge of breaking, an exceptionally old man, and, say, a one-legged midge hop on board all at once? Which one of these people are more worthy of your seat, if any are at all? Aren't judgements like these ones we've previously reserved for [insert deity's name here]? Or just plain immoral?

Just to get a sense of how cold the strictly moral account of this can be, consider the implications of something Hilka Klinkenberg, author of *At Ease...Professionally* and managing director of Etiquette International, said, "So much of etiquette is courtesy and consideration for other people. And it doesn't cost you a great deal to give up your seat and make it easier for someone else." No matter how you have behaved during the course of your day, by offering your seat to someone, you instantly feel like a hell of a guy. Never mind that if standing is so virtuous, than you're depriving someone else of virtue by letting them sit.

I finished the last bite of an undercooked hordog and asked myself one last question. What hurts more, our never-ending mental anguish or someone else dealing with ten more minutes of throbbing feet? As I began the long walk home, I had no doubt what my answer would be.

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THE EDISON OF THE TOOLSHED ORGASM

WILHELM REICH, PSYCHO-THERAPIST. BY WILL SELF

he twentieth century has been dominated—allegedly—by an enormous drive to understand the human mind and what ails it. From that first, fatal afternoon, when Sigmund Freud got the Wolfman to “just talk,” there has been an exponential increase in the number of practitioners prepared to argue that they’ve

found a “cure” for these pathologies—or at any rate a palliative.

But I ask you: What has been the end result of all this therapy? These pills and shocks, these scans and bans. A big zero. The world is, if anything, even crazier now than it was in 1897. Just as many people die of disease; just as many people go bonkers in the nut; and just as many people can’t get a truly satisfying orgasm. And, by truly satisfying, I mean an orgasm of such essential beauty and strength that it will save you from all the above.

You see, the basic and essential problem with most of the available therapies is that they require a willingness to change or a willingness to sacrifice the “malignant” parts of yourself. Wilhelm Reich saw through this load of baloney, offering instead a means of achieving good mental hygiene, based solely on doing what we like best.

Wilhelm Reich died in the state pen in 1957, a victim of a trumped up charge from the Food and Drink Agency. Granted, as the twentieth centuries’ great rebels go, the Vienna venal meister was a complete twerp. He wasn’t banged up for fomenting communism, or black revolution, but solely for promoting the use of a device known as the “orgone accumulator.”

The orgone accumulator is a relatively simple piece of unlicensed medical technology to get your head around or, indeed, inside. It’s essentially a large box built from successive layers of wood

and metal. According to its developer, once inside the subject would see that even a completely darkened box is not black, but bluish or bluish-grey because “orgone energy,” the force that animates all life throughout the cosmos, is itself blue in color, which is a big bonus for those of us who want to dress correctly for eternity, let alone the here and now.

Once the orgone accumulator is constructed—and remember you can use any old mate-

rials for this one, although alternating two-millimeter layers of steel and wood are recommended by Those Who Know—you get inside it and sit there. That’s right, just sit there. No tedious talking cure, no selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors, no rehab, no rebirthing, no nuttin’—just sit there. In a world crazed by its own sense of activity, of can-do, it’s nice to find someone who offers a universal panacea based on rank inactivity.

WILLIAM BURROUGHS, among others, was much taken by orgone accumulators. He would disappear into them for an hour or so at a time and claimed on numerous occasions to have achieved spontaneous orgasm—“Look! No hands!”—while squatting in the box. Is it too fanciful to imagine that it was Burroughs’s perverse adhesion to the utterly discredited theories of Wilhelm Reich that allowed him to live for eighty-five years whilst indulging in the kind of behaviors that put most individuals in quite another kind of box? I’ve no idea, but on the face of it it has to have some credence.

If the box doesn’t appeal, you can get your tool kit working to build any number of the other wacky, but essentially simplistic devices that Reich devised to harness this precious *elan vital*: the orgonoscope, the temperature-difference apparatus, the field meter, and the fluorophotometer. And while you’re hammering and jig-sawing away in your shed or garage, you can arm yourself against skepticism by reflecting on the fact that you have decided to throw your weight into supporting the theories of the one twentieth-century thinker to be comprehensively rejected by all the major ideological movements of his time.

Wilhelm Reich was initially a fairly conventional psychoanalyst. A member of Freud’s select inner circle, he could have just kicked back his heels, tended



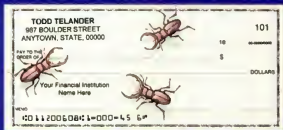
to the petting of the moneyed neuroses offered up by his patients, and become just another cheap, grifting couch jockey. But no! Reich discovered orgone energy and never looked back. Put simply—and it is an achingly simple idea—at the core of every substance, both organic and inorganic, is what Reich termed a “culture of bions.” These bions are “microscopically visible vesicles of functioning energy,” and the collective term for them is “orgone,” a term Reich derived from the combination of the words “organism” and “orgastic.” The organism end of things is obvious, but the orgastic component derives from what Reich believed to be the most explicit demonstration of the existence of orgone energy—namely, getting a boner. Marx looked to explain human social development and destiny by discovering fundamental laws of history. Freud hoped to do the same by uncovering the secret springs and cogs of the human psyche. Wilhelm Reich said nuts to all that and decided to contemplate the rising and falling of his knob. And, by contemplating this very local movement, he came up with just as universal a theory.

Reich's version of Dialectical Materialism or the Unconscious is the Orgasm Formula: Mechanical Tension leads to Bio-Energetic Charge which leads to Bio-Energetic Discharge which results in Mechanical Relaxation. In other words: you get it up; come; it goes down; you feel sleepy. The obvious virtue of Reich's formula over Marx's and Freud's is that it's demonstrable in the home, employing only one hand and—depending on gender and preference—a box of Kleenex.

I SUPPOSE SOME doubters might argue that what with the sexual revolutions of the sixties all of Reich's sexology is redundant—that nowadays we can all have as many guiltless orgasms as we want. But I say: Just look around you at the miserable state of the world! There's still disease a-plenty, street ranters galore, and puffed-up pols insisting that lobbyists give them head. Ours is still a world dominated by bad orgasms wherever you look. I say Wilhelm Reich is our man. He was a martyr to the century: rejected by the Communists who banned his books; rejected by the ghouly Freudians who expelled him from the Institute of Psychoanalysis; and finally imprisoned by the United States Government for trying to persuade people to have orgasms in boxes. Wilhelm—I salute you from my crotch. Yours is a philosophy that links everything we know to be true and just: being a good handyman; and handling yourself good, man.

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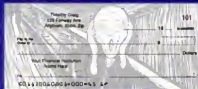
SKULLS



THE DANCE



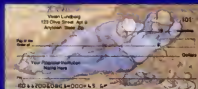
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**SPUNK
MOONING**

The Medium

Another opening at the Museum of Modern Art.
But inside the chatter was friendly. The stylish guests were
to darkest night—adorned occasionally with a poignant tie



is a Mess

A cold, dry wind was blasting a miserable city.
dressed in various shades of black—from almost blue,
or a pair of shock-red stockings. By Mark Kramer

Spunk Mooning, 1996 by Gilber & George

© 2000 V&A Museum



"Interior Scroll" by Carolee Schneemann from *Up To And Including Her Limits*. Schneemann had no choice but to do it. Hey, it came to her in a dream!

The attendees were making extravagant gestures with their hands in front of the art.

In fact, it was all so pleasant that a visitor from another age would hardly have guessed that the art they were making extravagant gestures in front of was

a set of clear plastic baggies—set amid a sparkle of sequins, plastic beads, and steel pins—containing the carcasses of a dead school of fish.

It was a weird moment. A few weeks earlier, the museum's premises had been the site of a not altogether dissimilar event when art student Jubal Brown defaced, with a trajectory gout of blue vomitus, Mondrian's "Composition in Red, White and Blue." Brown had told MoMA staff at the scene that he was actually ill, and waited until he was safely across the Canadian border before publicly declaring that the vomit was not only deliberate, but had been internally dyed blue as part of Brown's protest, seemingly successful, against "oppressively trite and banal" art. It soon came to light, that just months prior to the MoMA unpleasantness, in an Ontario art gallery, Brown had spewed his vomitus, dyed red this time, on another work, because Raoul Duffy's "Harbor at Le Havre," because it "was just so boring it needed some

color." (Both incidents were richly derivative of 1988's guerrilla blood painting on a MoMA wall, self-curated and executed by performance artist Monty Cantsin in August, 1988).

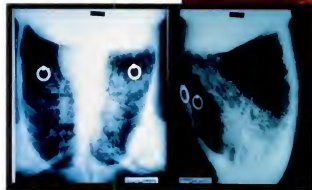
At the beginning of the fish opening, much of the lilted boho conversation centered on Brown's emetic work. But then the bags started to smell, the fishy bouquet wafting around the room, seeping into the convivial scrums of connoisseurship scattered throughout the fête. Despite Korean artist Bul Lee's explicit insistence on letting natural reality triumph over artificialized monoculture, MoMA's installers had laid in extra industrial deodorant, "in deference to Western olfactory sensitivities." But instead of extinguishing the smell, the deodorant created a second, underlying layer of scent—the result being an olfactory pastiche redolent of the urinal cakes in dockside flophouses. A gentle wash of titters and

muffled honks drifted through the gallery, and the liveliest, most eavesdroppable conversation turned to the topics of refrigeration and odors. But slowly the smiles began turning to grimaces, and as they did, a realization began forming in my reluctant brain: Abject art is back.

In the writings of Sigmund

Freud, students of the human condition are admonished again and again that "*inter urinas et faeces nascimur*." It is not known whether Professor Freud ever envisioned that a time would come when "between urine and feces" would also describe the career options of an entire generation of young artists just setting out in the world. But for better or worse—worse, mainly, let's face it—this is one of those times. That this is so was, of course, already in evidence a few years ago when Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ" convinced populist Republicans that they had a worthy target in the National Endowment for the Arts. For a bellicose few years, one could not pick up the Sunday paper without

**"It's not like someone jerked off
onto my palette," insists blood
artist Nana Olivas. "My body was
smeared with semen. It was a
very emotional, sexual
sort of experience."**



reading, depending on one's paper, grieving denunciations or high-minded defenses of abject art. Today, although the debate has cooled, the art is once again hot. Eighty years after Duchamp's "readymade" urinal (entitled, perhaps prophetically, "Fountain") raised a spume of bodily processes and by-products to the often-contentious level of art-world subject matter, this unlovely esthetic canon—described in a recent *New York* magazine jeremiad as "the Cacaeppee style"—is once more leaving its indelible mark on the world.

Sectioned-and-pickled-animal installations of "bad boy" Brit Damien Hirst—winner of the coveted Turner Prize—are currently snagging the headlines, for example; so are the even more revolutive cadaver-manipulations of slaughterhouse-worker-turned-sculptor Anthony-Noel Kelly; and then there's the feces-sculpture photographs of Gilbert and George.

The work of Gilbert and George, in particular, has been the object of the sort of terse criticality that "Cacaeppee" art typically inspires in the most cultivated minds. The British duo opened two shows in New York earlier this year, featuring pictures of themselves in various guises, including one where they moon the viewer, anuses glaring furiously, alongside magnified samples of their own excrement. Writing in a *New York Observer* article called

"Odious Gilbert & George, Now Stinking Up SoHo," Hilton Kramer denounced the "indefatigable British performers," who "began as a perverse vaudeville for an equally perverse cognoscenti." Kramer reassured his knowledge-hungry readership that "there are curators and critics who adore it, of course, and there is a fringe constituency in the gay world that takes a keen interest in some of its 'transgressive' subject matter—the teenage male anus, for example—but the mainstream art public has not been particularly enchanted by it." The most interesting aspect of Kramer's article, however, was a disclaimer: "What are currently on offer in the exhibition . . . are enormous photo-pieces featuring gigantic enlargements of what we are told are



Venerated relics of the battle to be taken seriously: *Piss Christ* by Andres Serrano (top), X-ray with Nipple Rings from *Visiting Hours*, an installation by Bob Flanagan in collaboration with Sherree Rose (left).

the artists' own feces. (I haven't been able to verify that claim, but on this subject, at least, I am certainly willing to take Gilbert and George at their word.)" (Emphasis added.)

Kramer's circumspection looked back to an earlier, embarrassing *Observer* article, one also dealing with the provenance of people's poop. The article concerned 32-year-old abstract excretionist Todd Alden, who—in a move that would encroach upon the louche canon of Mail Art as well—had mailed a sardonically worded, manifesto-like "call for entries" to 400 art collectors around the world.

Alden, in his petition to art-world luminaries, claimed that by sending him samples of their feces they would be contributing to "a contemporary rethinking of the Italian artist Piero Manzoni's epoch-making work, *Merda d'artista* ("Artist's Shit"), from 1961. In this work, Manzoni produced, conserved, and tinned 90 cans of

his own feces, which he sold by the ounce, based on that day's price of gold. Originally, Manzoni's sculptures were dismissed by critics and collectors as acts of mere Duchampian provocation. Manzoni continues to be exhibited in Europe; and the cans of "Artist's Shit" that found few buyers in 1961 are now being sold for as much as \$75,000.

Not only did Alden promise personalized tins for the art bigwigs' droppings, but "a large airtight container that fits snugly inside a toilet will be distributed to all participating collectors, thereby minimizing the amount of handling required to secure the excrement." Alden then followed up,

Athey hangs naked by his wrists while an assistant, attired like a Roman archer, pierces his flesh with a dozen spinal-tap needles.

last year, with a press release announcing the opening of an exhibit of 85 ported turds and a list of famous art-world types who had "responded."

The text of Alden's press release was uncritically reported as news by the *Observer's* Jonathan Napack. It turned out, however, that only one of the famous respondents Napack named—famed gallerist Irving Blum—had actually sent a stool sample to Alden. (The others listed as responding had done so with a rejection card provided by Alden, a detail omitted from his capily worded release.) The gaffe was noted with no small glee by Napack's successor, Jeffrey Hogrefe, who only a week later had snagged Napack's column and smirkingly chronicled the whole merdacious affair under the headline "You Can Just Call It a Case of Defecation of Character."

Interestingly, Napack's suspicions should perhaps have been raised at the first mention of an homage to Piero Manzoni. Since the Italian's death in 1963, the question of whether or not he actually filled his famous cans with his own excrement has been hotly debated. In 1994, the *Guardian* reported that a rich collector had purchased one of the original 90 Manzoni cans just to open it, to see it did in fact contain excrement. "It did," they reported. "But by opening it, he reduced its value to zero." Michael Warner, on the other hand, an art dealer from Cologne, Germany, claimed knowledge of at least one can that when opened had been found to contain tomato paste. On yet a third hand, Benjamin Buchloh, a professor at Barnard College, recalls a "performance piece" by the French artist Mark Bustamante "in which he made his dealer buy one of the Manzoni cans and open it. There was something inside, but they weren't sure what it was."



Sex artist Annie Sprinkle as Post Modern Pin-Up by James Stiles (top). The author, Mark Kramer, attending one of Annie Sprinkle's openings (left).



Perhaps fearing, perhaps hoping, to provoke such a lucrative controversy, the excretionistically minded Todd Alden—although helpfully pointing out that "scatology is emerging as an increasingly significant part of artistic inquiry"—refused all SPY's inquiries for a visit to the studio where his own canned celebrity shitscapes were perpetrated.

The Alden and Manzoni

incidents raise an important issue. Abject art prides itself on going where other art is afraid to go, in taking the "art experience" out of the airy world of forms and into the concrete here and now of life, in being *real*. The question, then, is, does it ruin the work if the supposedly abject materials or actions are, in effect, fake?

To many in the world of abject art, the answer would seem to be 'yes.' On an Adirondack Trailways coach traveling the Thruway to her upstate New York hideaway, pioneering blood artist Carolee Schneemann told SPY of the importance of working with abject materials—real ones.

Schneemann's work, which was the subject of a critically acclaimed show late last year, includes such pieces as "Meat Joy," "a wild 3-D collage," in the words of a *New York Times* critic, "of human bodies, raw fish, chickens, sausages, wet paint, and other stuff," and "Naked Action Lecture," the purpose of which Schneemann explains thus: "I lecture on my visual works...while

both dressed and undressed, dressing and undressing...[I] ask the questions: Can an artist be an art historian? Can an art historian be a naked woman? Does a woman have intellectual authority? Can she have public authority while naked and speaking? Was the content of the lecture less appreciable when she was naked?"

The work she is best known for, however, is "Internal Scroll," a performance piece in which she unspooled from out of her vagina, bloodied with her menstrual blood, a long letter to a film maker.

Explaining her choice to concentrate on blood as a medium she says, "Hermann [Nitsch] was going to do one of his own operatic meat performances, and I wanted to make a countergesture where I could infiltrate the male dynamic of male warfare blood with my own menstrual blood. The prevailing view at the time was that Herman's blood was disgusting—which was part of the fascination—but human female blood was simply not acceptable." Then and there she resolved to shift the performative focus of her art to her own bodily exudates, with works documenting the ebb and flow of her menstrual blood.

"Scroll" came to me in a dream," Schneemann told SPY. "I never wanted to physically enact the drawing. But the little nagging

voice that's part of your creative dynamic said that in order for this image to fulfill its meaning, you have to physicalize it."

(In the matter of other people's "physicalizations," however, Schneemann could be more squeamish. Participatory cultural commentator and SPY contributor Anthony Haden-Guest recalls Schneemann disrupting a 1970 personal appearance by Otto Muhl.

"I was sitting with Carolee in the front row of the Cosmos Club when suddenly these four naked people—two rather hideous men and two rather cute frauleins—appeared on-stage with a live squawking goose. One of the men, Otto Muhl, was waving a carving knife. Carolee, who apparently knew Muhl would be killing the unfortunate goose and using its remains to penetrate one of the frauleins, ignited the whole thing. Whereupon the playwright Heathcote Williams and I sprung into action. Heath grabbed Muhl. I grabbed the goose—saving it from a certain death, evisceration, and worse—and ran out of the Cosmos. I gave the goose to a hippie on a barge—who probably had it for dinner.")

Fellow blood artist Nana Olivas, the glistening puddles of gore and raw-patches of blood-soaked muslin on the floor of whose studio evoke the red-bag aspect of a crime scene, agrees with Schneemann about the importance of using real

bodily fluids in the construction of her art.

"Blood has a life all its own," rhapsodizes Olivas, daughter of famed feminist artist and psychic healer Nancy Azara. "Not only is it beautiful when it's fresh, but as it coagulates and decays, its colors can shift from a blush to a deep crimson to a scabby brown."

While the authenticity of her materials is important, there is also the process. Her "Tit Spiel (Ode to Pablo Neruda)" is a totemic configuration of breast images in blood that are the imprint of the lushly bosomed, and very married, Olivas's body. Also scumbled into this canvas's muslin, gesso, shellac, and ink mix is the byproduct of a nearby sex act with her husband. "It's not like someone jerked off onto my palette," she insists. "My body was smeared with semen. It was a very emotional, sexual sort of experience..."

Olivas and Schneemann are not alone in the importance they give to authenticity. Ron Athey—a bald, tattooed transvestite and former junkie who remains adamant about his "right to bleed in public"—depends upon the fact that his blood is HIV-positive for his acts of "dramatic

Ron Athey (below): "I hurt more at the gym doing squats than I do with a 25 gauge needle going through my chest."



Brown waited until he was safely across the Canadian border before publicly declaring that the vomit was not only deliberate, but had been internally dyed blue as part of his protest against "oppressively trite and banal art."

bleeding." A typical performance by America's busiest bleeding icon might include such tableaux as Athey hanging naked by his wrists while an assistant, attired like a Roman archer, pierces Athey's flesh with a dozen spinal-tap needles tufted like arrows, or Athey submitting to a crown-of-thorns rite in which twenty three-and-a-half inch silver needles are extracted from his shaven pate. At the conclusion of each performance, the stage is ritually cleansed with a bleach solution, enveloping the audience in a protective cloud of chlorine vapor. "The work is harsh," says Athey. "But the spirit is absolutely generous."

Even more generous was the late Bob Flanagan, a creative, joyfully twisted, and very nausea-friendly celebrant of his life-long bout with cystic fibrosis. For Flanagan, his terminal condition (he was never expected to live past childhood, though he died aged 43) was a much-cherished license to do to himself—*actually* do—things that would smack too much of mortality to the man in the street, like deliberately getting stabbed or driving a

Gunter Brus, the man widely credited with having invented the concept of "cesspool aesthetics," actually served jail time for the crime of "insulting the Republic of Austria" in a 1968 performance, "Art and Revolution," at the University of Vienna. According to MM Serra of the incorruptibly underground Filmmakers' Cooperative, this Aktion, or Happening, featured

Brus and his confederates "pissing, shitting, beating, hymn-singing, masturbating." Brus's co-star, Otto Muhl, was sentenced for his role to a month's incarceration for "inflicting light bodily injury," and would later become a practicing psychoanalyst in Vienna. (Muhl, who once observed that "the duty of the artist is to discover and bring out his own crappiness," today resides in another penal institution for what one art historian would describe only as "having sex with someone underage.") And then there was the charismatic Hermann Nitsch, whose "Orgy-Mystery Theater" (1968) would catapult him to eternal footnotedom for its innovative uses of entrails, blood, and excrement in a theatrical setting, the flavor of which can be gleaned from the following directions in his "Aktion 80": "New actors leap in to join those already trampling. With last reserves of strength and uttermost [sic] ecstasy the grapes and



Hermann Nitsch with carcass, from "Orgy-Mystery Theater".
The inherent drama of a splayed, dead cow is one of the biggest arrows in the abject artist's quiver.

nail through the head of his penis. For Flanagan, needless to say, to have faked his stunts would have been to miss the point.

But there are some limits

to the value of authenticity. That some materials are so "real" that the very thought of them will suffice—thus rendering moot the question of authenticity—is a concept indissolubly linked to the short, brutal life of Rudolph Schwarzkogler.

Schwarzkogler—whose work was displayed late last year at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum—occupied the inner circle of the Viennese "Aktionist" movement, a group designed to protest the impersonality and formality of society through emotional, direct, and disturbing actions. As a result, Schwarzkogler found himself hanging out with a pretty rough crowd. Fellow traveler

"With last reserves of strength and uttermost ecstasy, the grapes are trampled until a mixture of pulp, blood, juice, and excrement results."

entrails are trampled until a mixture of pulp, blood, juice, and excrement results. Pigs, dogs, sheep, bulls, cows, horse, and goats are led to the concrete basin. CRESCENDO FROM THE ORCHESTRA..."

It was the matter of Schwarzkogler's 1966 "Third Aktion," however, that really shook people up. Proffered without explication, it is a series of photographs that "shows," to quote from one account of the piece, "a blindfolded man with a bandaged penis splayed on sheets. The next photo shows him sitting on a ball, a fish placed in front of his genitals, its mouth propped open with razor blades.

Two more photos show the same naked man with what appears to be a shorter penis, with blood trickling down the ball."

When *Time* art critic Robert Hughes saw the photos he immediately assumed the photographic record to have established the communion between the razor blades, the fish, and Schwarzkogler's own penis to have been real and irrevocable. He wrote about the photos in 1972, describing the by then dead Schwarzkogler—



"Bob Flanagan in Hospital Bed," from *Visiting Hours*, an installation by Bob Flanagan in collaboration with Sheree Rose.

who, unbeknownst to Hughes had actually careened to his death from a second-story Vienna window in 1969—as "the Vincent van Gogh of body art," "[who] proceeded, inch by inch, to amputate his own penis, while a photographer recorded the act as an art event."

In retrospect, it seems clear that the huge fund of evidence already in place—both anecdotal and anatomical—should have suggested at once that Hughes had grievously erred, and that Schwarzkogler had staged the photographs with animal blood, bandages, and the appropriated pubic region of now-forgotten collaborator Meinz Cibulka. But somehow it did not, and the mythological value of Schwarzkogler's faux penectomy—not publicly discredited until 1990—is simultaneously a tribute to the power of its subject matter as well as the artist's own flair for photojournalism. When images of the "Third Aktion" were shown at the Hirshhorn, the pictures earned not entirely unadmiring reviews from the nation's press, who did not seem to mind Schwarzkogler's seeming act of deception.

Indeed, at a certain point,

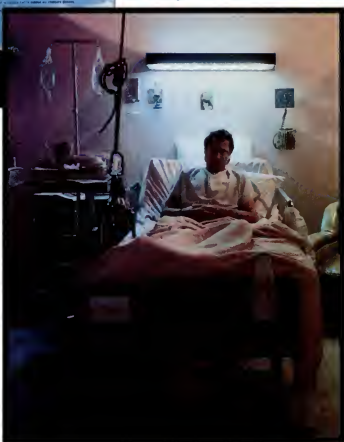
even the most vigorous abject artist must find the weight of the public's expectations, perversions, and desires to be ultimately overwhelming. Performance artist Karen Finley, for one, feels like she knows how Schwarzkogler would have felt at being held accountable for an extremity he did not actually profess to perform.

"I did not stuff yams up my ass," gushed Finley in an exclusive *SPY* interview, referring to a notorious 1986 performance, "Yams Up My Granny's Ass," at the now-defunct East Village nightclub The World. The performance had inspired a series of articles in the *Village Voice*, including one by Pete Hamill (now the editor-in-chief

of the *New York Daily News*) in which he fantasized censoriously about Finley going to the supermarket and having sex with the produce department. Hamill did not actually see the show and Finley feels his criticism was undeserved. "All I did was rub yams on my butt-cheeks," she protested.

Today Finley works with the medium of breast milk, as in her video "I Am Nature," a reference to a typically testicular Jackson

Schwarzkogler had staged photographs with animal blood, bandages, and the appropriated pubic region of now-forgotten collaborator Meinz Cibulka.



Pollock quote. ("What I have done is feminized action painting by spraying breast milk on black velvet. A lot of people think breast milk is a relatively unbroken spray, like a piss stream. In fact, the effect's more aerosolized as it erupts from the breast's many tiny orifices and ducts.") The last twelve years have been a ceaseless quest to be taken seriously, through inserting peaches into her vagina and "flossing my genitals with 200-foot of yellow ribbon to protest the Gulf War." But

even now, Finley admits to a feeling of being "America's joke."

While it was Finley's chocolate body suit—intended as a reference to the Tawana Brawley affair—that drew the ire of Helms and his NEA-hating cronies, it was the misreporting of her yam episode, Finley feels, that did her reputation the most damage. It made it seem, she said, as if she had no talent.

"The story I was telling was about a grandmother being abused by her grandson, who was on a crack binge; and it's Thanksgiving and he's abusing her. And the work was kind of symbolic and conceptual. [The yam rumor] said something sexual and deviant about me. Immediately I'm demonized, I'm a slut."

"This is what really bothers me," Finley continues. "With [abject art], it's all about the idea. But in a lot of mainstream society, that's the thing that's been lost. We look at things so literally; we get very upset about whether it actually happened. Did Schwarzkogler's penis actually get cut off? Who cares? It's all art." Tell that to some poor fish, rotting in a ziploc bag. ▀

THIRTY OVER 30

HOOORAY FOR BEING ALIVE!

SURROUNDED AS WE ARE IN THE NINETIES WITH BEAUTIFUL, WONDERFUL, GENUINE YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE TEENAGE ROCKERS HANSON AND YOUNG ALICIA SILVERSTONE, IT CAN SOMETIMES BE A STIMULATING EXERCISE TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME OF OUR OTHER SEEMINGLY VIBRANT CELEBRITIES AND APPRECIATE THEM FOR WHO THEY REALLY ARE! NOT TO SUGGEST THAT THERE MIGHT BE ANYTHING UNDER THE GLITZY SURFACE THAT MIGHT BE A FUNNY AND INTERESTING SURPRISE! NO SIREE!

ELIZABETH SHUE

And Her Sock of Ages.



Age: 33 As a lithe and fun-filled little slip of a prostitute in *Leaving Las Vegas*, Elizabeth Shue stole our hearts. We watched with joy as a relationship of the lovely father-daughter type developed between Shue and co-star *Nicolas Cage*. Well, the Academy may have missed one here! It turns out that mistress-of-disguise Elizabeth had already been treading the creaky boards of Earth for *three decades* when she starred with Cage in the Mike Figgis-helmed alcodrama! Yes indeed. With a birth date in 1964, it seems fair to say: "There is an old woman who lives in E. Shue." Nor literally of course! And not in a bad sense! In a fine, good sense!

A Strange Old Woman on the Bus!

JOAN OSBORNE



Age: 35 Who wasn't struck, in 1995, by the winsome, pre-Raphaelite Chelsea Clinton-clone behind the hit song *One of Us*, and its memorable chorus "What if God was one of us? Just a slob like one of us?" What a wonderfully fresh young questioner she seemed, searching the universe with eyes of a child, and with a child's courage to ask the Big Questions. The truth, though, was that Osborne was already 33. Well done, Joan. You had us all fooled...for a while!



Age: 30 Teeny female readers of *Seventeen* magazine voted long-haired Bush frontman Gavin Rossdale their Sexiest Hunk of the Year. What a surprise for them to learn that those snake-hip wiggles are in fact the work of a 30 year old man! Good sport Gavin will surely be laughing at the clerical confusion as he hands over his *Seventeen* crown to the deserving runner-up—whoever he may be!

OLESTRA, A Very Complex Molecule!

Age: 38 Hip and funky fat substitute Olestra certainly did a good job convincing us all that we were eating real potato chips! But somehow it forgot to tell us that it was actually invented all the way back in 1959 by biochemists at **Procter & Gamble**! We may go back to being fat, but at least we'll have funny memories of this confusion!



COURTNEY COX | LISA KUDROW

Age: 35 Raven-haired Courtney Cox plays a sexy young woman on the television show *Friends*, but when the cameras switch off, clever actress Cox walks to the studio parking lot with careful dignity!

Age: 33 Who says lightning never strikes twice in the same sitcom? Anyone who says that should take a respectful closer look at one Lisa Kudrow, whose vivacious ditz *Phoebe* has more than one pair of sensible shoes in her closet! 33 perhaps, in fact! One for each year she is old!

PAT SMEAR, Poo Fighter

Age: 38 *Calling all cars!* Practical joker on the loose! Armed with sense of fun and extremely comically dangerous! We laughed when Pat Smear, guitarist for teen-beat rockers the **Foo Fighters** and host of MTV's "House of Style," stuck a child-like tongue in the mouth of **Kelsey Grammer** on national TV. We howled when Smear and his foo-fighting buddies made a cheeky parody of cheesy Mentos ads for their video **Big Me!** Turns out, though, that the funny joke has been on us, the public, all along! Bleach-blond Mr. Smear is 38 years old! Woe betide the next industry prankin' Pat decides to play a funny joke on now that his young person's rock 'n' roll joke has run its clever course!

MIKE WALLACE KURT LODER PAUL NEWMAN Clearly Over 30, but Man!

Mike Wallace: Age: 78

He's got a twinkly smile that puts dictators, demagogues, and CEOs instantly at ease. In fact, however, helmet-haired Mike—real name **Myron**—was born all the way back in 1918. What a tricky, otherwise very honest, man!

Kurt Loder: Age: 55

MTV's Kurt Loder may not have Wallace's gravitas as a newsmen, but at a not-going-anywhere 55 years old, the two of them could probably have a conversation about the *Meaning of Life* that wasn't total gibberish!

Paul Newman: Age: 72 Always the smart one, super-intelligent actor Paul has been having fun with his public. After a full and rounded career of films like *Cool Hand Luke* and *Buch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*—not to mention a signature range of salad dressings, mustards, lemonades, popcorn and pretzels—game-playing Paulie had us all thinking he was ensconced comfortably in his early sixties. He's 72! What a clever "weaver of dreams" he is!



Old Friends

STEALTH TECHNOLOGY, Shhhh!

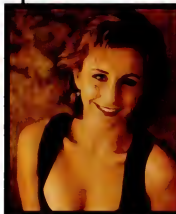
Age: 40+ Sneaky, seemingly new "stealth" technology for aircraft dates back to the 1950s! Looks like a case of stealth by name, stealth by nature! Just kidding!

BART SIMPSON, Eat Her Old Panties!

Age: 38 Who could have helped but fall in love with adorable postmodern scamp Bart Simpson? When not playing deliciously puerile phone pranks on the patrons of Moe's Tavern, or "recontextualizing" America with bouts of self-referential humor, pre-pubescent Bart is at home savoring the watery calm of her—yes *her!*—late thirties! Bart's real name is an old woman named **Nancy Cartwright**. We can see where he learned his love of mischief and tricks!

ECSTASY, No Spring Trippin'!

Age: 84 If a man were to offer you some "methylenedioxy-methamphetamine" in a nightclub, you'd probably tell him to go home and curl up with a glass of warm milk and a big, boring book about science written in special large type for old people! Well, you've just turned down some Ecstasy! **News Flash!** The world's ninetiesest, raviest drug could actually be collecting a pension right now, if it were a person, given that it blew its first mind back in 1914! We knew the whole point of taking ecstasy was the funny thoughts it makes you think. Looks like the confusing little chemical had us thinking it was one of our special *au courant* nineties things when, in fact, it's old!



Age: 36 As "Andrea," the editor of the **Beverly Hills High** student newspaper, Gabrielle Carteris was like **90210's** Mistress of Propaganda. Maybe it was during her talent-acting preparations for the role that she discovered her impressive method for keeping secrets. Like, say, that she turned 30 during the show's second season?

Age: 33 Hothead, gambler, occasional drinker: what more seething bundle of raw, teenage nerves could there ever be than **Steve**, the show's rebellious younger blond man? Viewers who may actually have been genuinely concerned by the direction "Steve's" life seemed to be taking may be surprised that Steve's real name is actor Ian Zierling, a man of age 33. Well done on fooling us, Steve! Or should we say, "Ian!"

9021 Old!



GABRIELLE CARTERIS
IAN ZIERLING

"PHAT," Ancient Mariner, Yo!

Age: 319 People who enjoy using the new, fashionable word "phat" to describe something that is very good may be in for an interesting surprise. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "phat" dates back all the way to 1678—1678!—when someone wrote, "As the **Brine** runs from the **Salt** after it is laded out of the Phats." Phew! What a well-deserved rest "phat" has earned itself!

TOM AND TOM, Prune-Juice Guys

Age: 31 The boyish, blond millionaires behind the Nantucket Nectars beverage company wear baggy shorts around the office and have instituted a "no-necktie" policy for the people who work for them! Silly us for assuming that meant they were easy-going young men! In fact, Tom and Tom were both born in 1966, which makes them over 30. It never occurred to us that maybe all that **Loose Clothing** might in fact be evidence of a nasty skin condition instead of a youthful "casual" attitude. Our apologies gentlemen, for buying your product without fully appreciating where you were coming from. Duh to us! We goofed!



COOLIO Fantastic Dotage!

Age: 35 Life as a young person in **South Central Los Angeles**, as everyone knows, is youthful and a lot of fun—especially for its dynamic young rap stars like Coolio—but it can also be rough and tough. Almost certainly it must have been some strange pension law for gang alumni that prevented Coolio from announcing to the world that he was in fact 35 at the time of his greatest, young-person-style success. There must also be a good reason for why he had a young person's hairstyle all that time! What could it be?

PAGERS, Turning Over an Old Leaf

Age: 40+ Electronic pagers present themselves as the height of hipness. But users will be fascinated to learn that they were invented in 1956! Clever, discreet pagers must have been celebrating their birthdays in "silent mode!"



BABY FACE That has a Secret

Age: 38 This *enfant lovable* of the R&B slow-jam dropped some playful hints in his recent duet with **Stevie Wonder** about a funny secret he has! If you listen carefully, "How Come, How Long" had lyrics about **Domestic Violence!** Domestic violence? That issue which affects mainly older people? Yes. What a classy, dignified swansong by real-name Russell Edmunds!



Age: 30 The first time the world met Mr. Dustin Hoffman, he was a confused sex-having 21-year-old college graduate in **The, er...Graduate**. In fact, Hoffman was already 30 when the movie came out, not too much younger than co-star **Anne Bancroft**. How the pair must have laughed about his pretending to have all that sex!

LIPOSUCTION, Seventy Lean Years!

Age: 76 Raise your hand if you thought you'd been given the impression that the surgical technique of liposuction was a fresh and nineties new way of making fat people look thinner! You are not alone! The interesting reality, however, is that the first liposuction procedure was performed in 1921, when an old man named **Dr. DuJarrrier** sucked the excess fat from a then-young dancer's knee via a "uterine curette." Who knew that seemingly new liposuction had such a distinguished and lengthy life-story folded cleverly away!

ALEX KELLY TED BUNDY

Old Enough to Know Better

Age: 31 So bound up is Mr. Kelly's public persona with teenage parties and clumsy sex, it's easy to nod along with the idea that this handsome rapist is still a teen. Hard math would beg to differ: all that stuff was fifteen years ago!

Age: 42 Bad-boy serial killer Theodore Bundy initially managed to convince cops he was a college student! Nice try, then-32-year-old Ted!



HENRY WINKLER IN HAPPY DAYS, Ayyyyyy-ging!

Age: 39 With his laid-back manner, motorcycle, and black leather jacket, teenage rebel Arthur Fonzarelli taught young people across the globe, from Venezuela to Vladivostok, about the very essence of young behavior! In an incredible chain of circumstances, however, it seems that genuine teenagers the world over were taking instructions—by the end of the show's run—from a person of 39 years. If he had been deliberately misleading—which of course he wasn't—his name could be Henry Hoodwinkler! What a bad joke!

STOCKARD CHANNING IN GREASE, Look at Me I'm Seventy!

Age: 35 In 1978, Stockard Channing had us all weeping with her portrayal of the catty, tormented teen-pregnancy victim Rizzo in the high-school coming-of-age movie **Grease**. How we would have risen amazedly from our seats if we'd known that actress Channing was in fact 35! No wonder she didn't cough when she smoked cigarettes during the slumber-party sequence—unlike a certain Olivia Newton John we could mention!

RALPH MACCHIO Coming of Age?

Coming of Old Age! MICKEY ROONEY

Age: 34 King of the celluloid bildungsroman Macchio had us hanging on his every spasm of coltish impatience throughout the **Karate Kid** and its successful sequel **Karate Kid II**. Turns out, though, that like any good piece of Eastern Philosophy, there was—how you say?—"a lot more than met the eye." Zen-master Macchio had already "become a man" several times over!

Age: 38 What a short and playful teenager that was alongside **Judy Garland** in all those movies from the past! In fact, very interestingly, Rooney was all of 38 years old when he was playing some of those resourceful urchins! Everybody knows Rooney is an old man now. How wonderfully surprising that it now emerges he was old even when he was having us believe he was young. What a quirky secret!



DEBORAH HARRY, Pacemaker of Glass!

Age: 31 The groundbreaking yellow-haired-ingenu who ran the **Blondie** operation set every male foot in the world firmly tapping! Vigorous hit songs like **Sunday Girl** had us all agog at the wonderful bounciness of being young. Clever, teasing Debbie even had love-filled young boys the world over convinced that this pretty golden tinkerbelle was the genuine article, an object of legitimate sexual desire. In fact, as a hard-nosed, goal oriented businessperson of 31 years of age, skillful Deborah should be afforded the respect she is due as the slippery slidy shapeshifter of Seventies Rock 'n' Roll! ▶

Are You There God?...

... I Have a Few Thoughts on the Internet

Strictly speaking, it is only themselves that such women love with an intensity comparable to that of the man's love for them.

Nor does their need lie in the direction of loving, but of being loved...

—Sigmund Freud, 'On Narcissism'



BITCH, THE LATEST OFFERING FROM ELIZABETH WURTZEL, is a book you can judge by its cover. Unlike *Prozac Nation*, on which Wurtzel only exposes her midriff, she's completely naked this time. Her right hand is draped seductively over the back of a chair, and her left hand is resting on her head, the middle finger extending upwards to form the 'T' of *Bitch*. Her nipples, mercifully, are cloaked in shadow.

But it's the smile on her face that is the clue to the book's contents. It's a knowing, mischievous smile, a smile that says, 'I know this is a tacky way to promote my book, but what can I do?' She's not really flipping you the bird, you understand. She's acceding to the demands of America's sex-obsessed, tabloid culture and at the same time advertising her superiority to it. It's a post-modern marketing ploy, a publicity stunt that captures the zeitgeist and comments on it simultaneously.

Elizabeth Wurtzel is the best-known of a new generation of nonfiction writers, nearly all of whom are women, and most of whom, oddly enough, went to Harvard: as well as Wurtzel, there is Melanie Thornstrom (Class of '87), Katie Roiphe ('90), Farai Chideya ('90), J.C. Herz ('93), and Tara McCarthy ('93). They're the latest pledges to a literary sorority which includes Kathryn Harrison, Daphne Merkin, Mary Karr, Caroline Knapp, Mary Gordon, and Lucy Grealy, all authors of high-tone, confessional autobiographies. The Harvard chapter of this sorority is fast becoming its own brand, the diffusion line of the more upscale 'crisis memoir.'

While presenting themselves as authorities on livewire, Gen X topics like the Internet, sexual politics, and depression, what they nearly all have in common is a reliance on personal reminiscences rather than conventional reporting skills to make their points.

Their sense of excep-

How the personal memoirs of young, female Ivy-leaguers become sweeping social commentary.

BY TOBY YOUNG

tionalism, a hallmark of the Harvard graduate, infuses everything they write, though it sits a little strangely with their conviction that their experiences are somehow typical of their generation as well. Perhaps no other school could have produced women arrogant enough to dredge up their inner children while they're still, basically, children.

The prevailing orthodoxy at all Ivy League schools now, particularly Harvard, is that any claim to objectivity is bogus, that a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status inevitably informs everything they write. The upshot is that subjective experience has been granted a significance that it never used to possess.

This academic consignment of objectivity to the cultural scrapheap has coincided with a general trend in publishing towards personality-driven books. After the astonishing success of *Lacocca*, the Chrysler chairman's self-serving autobiography, in the mid-eighties, publishers have scrambled to sign up strong personalities to head up their lists, while books by authors who weren't deemed 'promotable' were quietly dropped. Today, the whole industry is geared towards creating franchises and brands around key individuals, a change reflected in the ascension of marketing vice presidents and the decline of editors. The traditional virtues of big, non-fiction books wrestling with the issues of the day—impartiality, accuracy, fair-mindedness—have been jettisoned in favor of more touchy-feely, some would say 'female,' virtues, such as sharing and opening-up. In the current climate, books by attractive Harvard coeds, laced with vivid accounts of traumatic childhood experiences, are thought to be pretty safe bets.

In effect, these writers have been granted an academic license, and given a financial incentive, to indulge their narcissism. They've been persuaded by professors and publishers alike that their solipsistic egotism is a form of higher journalism, rather than a commonplace personality disorder. Due to an unfortunate combination of circumstances, they've been able to pass off what are essentially their diaries as zeitgeist-capturing primary texts, windows to the soul of a generation.

ELIZABETH WURTZEL: happy at last. A modern-day version of the fast-living, jazz-dancing Anais Nin—without the bongos, of course.

Not surprisingly, with the exception of *Prozac Nation*, none of these books have been big sellers. In spite of the book-buying public's seemingly unquenchable appetite for the homespun philosophies of swashbuckling business leaders, they've been less impressed by what 25-year-old girls have to say about—for instance—the inherent racism of the news media. The combination of academic high-mindedness and aggressive, lowbrow marketing tactics just hasn't gone over. Though these authors are hip to the way the modern publishing game is played—pick a hot-button issue, stick a sexy picture of yourself on the jacket, play the Harvard card—wanting to be judged as the intellectual heirs of Gloria Steinem, Germaine Greer, and Betty Freidan is asking a little too much.

WHEN MELANIE THERNSTROM TURNED IN HER SENIOR HONORS THESIS in 1987, she had little idea of the Pandora's Box she was about to open. Called *Mistakes of Metaphor*, it was an account of the murder of her best friend, Roberta 'Bibi' Lee, by Lee's boyfriend three years earlier. Michael Blumenthal, her poetry professor, was so impressed he showed it to two literary agents, Glen Hartley and Lynn Chu, who, after some minor revisions, showed it to some publishers. By the time the dust had settled in the ensuing bidding war, Melanie Thernstrom had an advance of \$367,000.

The Dead Girl, which was published by Pocket Books in 1990, is a peculiar combination of literary theory and true crime. It's a rambling, articulate mess of a book, precisely the kind of memoir you'd expect from a Harvard coed with the collected works of Jean-Paul Sartre on her bookshelf. The real subject of the book, needless to say, is not Roberta Lee but Melanie Thernstrom—her boyfriend (the writer Bill McKibbin under a pseudonym), her weight problem, her attempted suicide—and she goes on at some length, in a lit-crit kind of way, to justify this. "It's not just a murder story," she told *The Boston Globe*. "It's about me too. And about the coming of age. It is about metaphor and language and how you negotiate loss and death." Harold Brodkey loved it—"I like this book better than *In Cold Blood*"—but not surprisingly, fans of the true-crime genre didn't. Its initial print run of 60,000 was unrealistic. It wasn't a big seller.

In the interviews she gave to promote the book, Thernstrom took pains to distance herself from her whopping advance. "It has everything to do with my agents. I don't have the talent for making money. They do." She also made it clear it had been her publisher's idea to give it a conventional, true crime structure, concluding with the murder trial, and she complained about the title, which was suggested by one of her agents. "It's hard to think of your own dear book being called *The Dead Girl*," she told *People* magazine. As far as future projects went, Thernstrom told the *Globe*, she planned to turn her attention to poetry and possibly a children's book. Another foray into non-fiction was conceivable, she admitted, "but only if it is personal autobiographical writing."

And personal, autobiographical writing it was—sort of. *Halfway Heaven: Diary of a Harvard Murder*, published this September by Doubleday, was another murder story, but this time about someone Thernstrom had only briefly met: an Ethiopian Harvard student who murdered her roommate and then committed suicide. Lest the reprise of her earlier topic strike any reader as exploitative, *Halfway Heaven* was couched ingeniously in Thernstrom's first-person meditations about her own discomfort at reporting on such a tragic affair. The poetry and children's books, it seemed, would have to wait.

LIKE SEVERAL OF THE HARVARD GRADUATES who followed in her footsteps, Melanie Thernstrom is fairly well-connected. Her mother, Abigail, is a prominent neoconservative political scientist and her father, Stephan, is the Winthrop Professor of American History at Harvard. But the next Harvard graduate to publish her diary, Katie Roiphe, was even better connected. Her father, Herman, is a well-known New York psychoanalyst and her mother is the feminist writer Anne Roiphe, author of

"We are paying [men] the honor of communicating as honestly as we can, and treating them as we would want to be treated. After all, if more men gained sensitive listening skills they would have 'intuition' too."

—Gloria Steinem



GLORIA STEINEM: Despite having worked for a while as a Playboy bunny, Gloria generally managed to keep her personal reminiscences out of her feminism.

Up *The Sandbox* and for years a regular contributor to the *New York Times*.

Nor coincidentally, Katie Roiphe's big break came when the *Times* published an op-ed piece by her in November, 1991, arguing that the then widespread hysteria about date rape was a *maladie imaginaire*. This quickly led to an agent and a book deal and, in 1993, *The Morning After* was published by Little Brown.

The Morning After reads more like a polemical essay than a personal memoir, not unlike *The Beauty Myth* by Naomi Wolf and *Backlash* by Suzan Faludi, except that in place of an argument it substitutes an endless series of personal anecdotes. In the promiscuities and political affections of a handful of her classmates, Roiphe seeks to find a sweeping critique of American sexual attitudes, or at least something substantial enough to justify the subtitle "Sex, Fear, and Feminism." Where Roiphe parts company with Wolf and Faludi, however, is in her attacks on many of the shibboleths of the modern feminist movement. In particular, she singles out the hysteria over date rape on college campuses, claiming it stems from a Victorian conception of women as passive victims whose virtue needs to be protected from predatory men.

Almost overnight, Roiphe became the politically correct movement's favorite whipping boy, with hundreds of Princeton students signing a petition against her. In the months following the publication of *The Morning After*, she received sack-loads of hate-mail, with one feminist labeling her "the Clarence Thomas of women." Her critics were right about one thing: Roiphe had balls.

Strangely, however, in the Introduction to the paperback edition, Roiphe complains about the partisan reaction to *The Morning After*, taking her critics to task for responding in such a blind, knee-jerk way. What was she expecting, hosannas all round? She deliberately took a provocative, controversial line on a hot-button issue, a move guaranteed to polarize the debate, not produce a climate of measured, thoughtful discussion. "In an age of fast food and microwave ovens," she laments, "it seems natural to reach for the equivalent in ideas," forgetting for a moment that her own book grew out of a 350-watt Samsung of an op-ed piece.

Since the publication of *The Morning After*, Roiphe has frequently complained about being unfairly cast as a neoconservative, yet she's done little to contradict the impression. Her most recent book, *Last Night in Paradise*, which is even more anecdotal than *The Morning After*, at times reads like a wistful lament for the nineteenth century, with its "strong social codes" and "rules to live by," and she recently wrote an article for *Esquire* in which she confessed that "my independence is in part an elaborately constructed facade that hides a more traditional feminine desire to be protected and provided for." It's as if she's been pushed into an anti-feminist position by the notoriety she attracted for her first book. As John Updike is fond of saying, celebrity is a mask that's impossible to take off.

THIS WILLINGNESS TO PLAY ALONG WITH THE MEDIAS TYPECASTING

when it comes to promoting a book, coupled with endless complaints about the typecasting when it no longer suits them, is typical of the Harvard school of nonfiction writers. It's an odd combination of preciousness and hucksterism, naïveté and nous. An even better example than either Thernstrom or Roiphe is Elizabeth Wurtzel.

If Thernstrom was the trailblazer, showing how to turn your leather-bound Harvard Coop diary into a \$367,000 advance, Wurtzel led the stampede. She didn't have any of Thernstrom's well-bred reservations about hogging the spotlight. With a cock in each hand, a snout full of cocaine, and a belly full of bile, Wurtzel tore through Harvard like Courtney Love on a bad-hair day, spitting out antidepressants wherever she went. By the time she was through she had a *Rolling Stone* Journalism Award, a gig at *The New Yorker* and a contract to write what would become the most reviled book of the decade, *Prozac Nation*.

So much has been written about *Prozac Nation*, published by Houghton



MELANIE THERNSTROM:

(top) turning tragedy's silver lining into gold.

KATIE ROIPHE:

(bottom) ignoring the view from a room of her own.

"Sometimes I think I began writing in order to make room for the wandering that haunts my soul and hacks and saws at my body; to give it a place and a time; to turn its sharp edge away from my flesh; to give, seek, touch, call, bring into the world a new being who won't restrain me, who won't drive me away, who won't perish from very narrowness."

—Helene Cixous



Mifflin in 1994, it's one of those books you feel you don't need to read to get a handle on. You don't. It turns out to be just as you imagined: a torturous, nerve-shattering, fingers-on-a-blackboard kind of book. Reading it is like being locked in a padded cell for 48 hours with a younger version of George Casanza's mother. It's one ceaseless, narcissistic whine: about how depressed she is all the time, how she kept being prescribed inadequate medication, how her father wasn't there for her...on and on it goes. It should have a warning label on the cover: "Do not attempt to read this book without a bottle of 200 Ibuprofen immediately on hand."

In the Afterword to *Prozac Nation*, written a year after all the negative reviews appeared, Wurtzel claims this was precisely the effect she intended. "I found myself saying to not a few people who would tell me they found the book angering and annoying to read: Good. Very good: That means I did what I had set out to do."

Yet this triumphalist tone, congratulating herself on having yanked her critics' chains, sits a little oddly with the endlessly repeated theme of *Prozac Nation*: No one understands me. Wurtzel is like one of those annoying adolescents who preempts the rejection of her peers by acting out, then wallows in self-pity because nobody wants to be her friend. She attacks the media for over-exposing Prozac—"it's turning a serious problem into a joke"—yet she was the one who called her book *Prozac Nation*, as if her own struggle with mental illness spoke to the concerns of the whole country. She complains that clinical depression has received so much press coverage that she has "ceased to be this freakishly depressed person" and become "downright trendy," but that's what happens if you pose on the cover of your book wearing a kinderwhore T-shirt and an expression which, in her own words, says, "I'm depressed—fuck me." (It's like the cover of a video called *Bell de Jar*.) Reading the Afterword, it's as though she's forgotten she was responsible for putting the "press" into depression.

Tales of Wurtzel's drug-fueled, attention-seeking behavior abound. At Harvard she would go up to men at parties and say, "I'm writing a book about Harvard. You're in it." She told a society writer for the *New York Times* that her suffering was just as meaningful as what was happening in Bosnia. When *New Yorker* editor Hendrick Hertzberg broke off their affair shortly before she was let go from the magazine, Wurtzel talked of using their relationship against him. She threw a hissy fit when Mario Pulice, art director of Doubleday, showed her the cover of *Bitch*, demanding that her stomach be airbrushed to look more aerobized. She posed topless for British *GQ*.

Needless to say, her relentless self-promotion has paid off like gangbusters. *Prozac Nation* sold sufficiently well, particularly in paperback, to net her a \$500,000 advance for *Bitch*, which is being published this January. Judging from the advance reading excerpt, a 52-page chapter called "Hey Little Girl Is Your Daddy Home," *Bitch* won't be any better received than her first book. It's a pseudo-feminist defense of Amy Fisher, the Long Island Lolita serving ten-to-fifteen for the attempted murder of Mary Jo Buttafuoco, on the grounds that, wouldn't you know it, she's not so very different from the way Elizabeth Wurtzel was at her age. For Amy Fisher's sake, let's hope *Bitch* doesn't fall into the hands of the Albion State Correctional Center's parole board.

By the time *Prozac Nation* hit bookstores, the blueprint for the successful Harvard nonfiction book was established. Pick a big, fat, juicy topic, preferably something to do with sex; pack in as many personal reminiscences as you can, including lots of sex, and pass them off as representative of an entire generation (i.e. call your book "_____ Nation"); slap a sexy picture of yourself on the jacket; and casually exploit any personal connections you have in the media, including in several cases having sex with them. An exception to this of course is Tara McCarthy *Been There, Haven't Done That*, her tell-all autobiography about clinging onto her virginity in spite of having done everything but—a non-confessional memoir. (Thernstrom, Roiphe, and Wurtzel, on the other hand, have dated so many well-known authors they should be cheerleaders at the annual Artists and Writers softball game in the Hamptons.)

One inevitable question is: Why Harvard? The obvious answer is that the extensive network



J.C. HERTZ:

author of the strangely titled *Surfing on the Internet*, standing an actual surfboard!

"Women talk for a variety of reasons. Sometimes women talk for the same reasons men stop talking. There are four common reasons women talk: 1. To convey or gather information. 2. To explore and discover what it is she wants to say. (He stops talking to figure out inside what he wants to say. She talks to think out loud.) 3. To feel better and more centered when she's upset. (He stops talking when he is upset. In his cave he has a chance to cool off.) 4. To create intimacy. Through sharing her feelings she is able to know her loving self."

—John Gray

of Harvard graduates among the cultural elite takes care of its own. "The Harvard people really look out for each other," says *Vanity Fair* critic James Wolcott. Another answer is that Harvard grooms its students for success. "My take on Harvard has always been that it's a consummate education in high-powered, professional networking," says an editor at *Slate*. Harvard also instills its students with the self-confidence to write autobiographical books while still in their twenties—and thechutzpah to dress them up as zeitgeist-bottling generational statements. "The kids who graduate from Harvard are relentlessly nurtured to believe in their own exceptionalism," says Joy De Menil, a Harvard graduate and Associate Editor at Random House. "Having been told by friends and teachers that your ideas are exquisite, that's the time you have the audacity to go ahead and publish."

This leaves the question of why so many Harvard women, as opposed to men, have landed book deals recently. The answer is that nonfiction books by women are one of the few growth areas in publishing at the moment. They jibe with the therapeutic, encounter-group atmosphere of Clinton's America, and they're the likeliest candidates to be picked by the Oprah Book Club, the most influential endorsement there is. Women—particularly young, attractive women—who are prepared to share their most intimate experiences with daytime talk-shows hosts are very "promotable." "I don't think anyone wants to hear from smart young men at the moment," says Daniel T. Max, a Harvard graduate and unemployed cultural critic.

One of the most successful exponents of the Harvard nonfiction formula is J.C. Herz, a brassy South African with a gift for self-advertisement. Her first book, *Surfing on the Internet* (sic), published by Little Brown in 1995, has a huge picture of her on the cover wearing a low-cut cardigan with—surprise!—nothing underneath. The blurb on the back lets you know she's a *Playboy* contributor and the chapter headings include "Cross-Dressing in Cyberspace," "Rolling in the MUD," and "Cybersuicide." *Surfing on the Internet* is basically the diary Herz kept while she was cooped up in the basement of Harvard's Science Center playing on an IBM PC. Judging from the breathless pace of her prose, Herz should have laid off the coffee.

Her follow-up, *Joystick Nation*, published by Little Brown earlier this year, is an equally fast-paced survey of the world of video games. (Again with the "Nation"?) As you might expect from the author of *Surfing on the Internet*—the correct phrase is "Surfing the Net"—it's riddled with misnomers. Defender was not a "shooter," for heaven's sake. It was a "shoot-'em-up." *Joystick Nation* also enjoys the distinction of containing the worst sentence ever written by a college graduate: "In this business, software drives hardware with jackboots and a riding crop."

A RARE DEPARTURE FROM THE ESTABLISHED FORMULA was Farai Chideya's *Don't Believe the Hype*, in that she kept personal reminiscences to a minimum. Given the book's subtitle, "fighting cultural misinformation about African-Americans," however, Chideya's funky, multi-cultural persona was naturally part of the package. And even in this company, Chideya, a 27-year-old Harvard graduate, is a hustler without equal. She likes to claim she was a reporter at *Newsweek* for four years, when in fact for some of that time she would more properly be described as having been an intern there.

Her website www.popandpolitics.com, lists every single contribution she's ever made to a national newspaper or magazine, though her by-line was often one of 13. Nothing is too trivial to leave out, including a letter she wrote to *The American Spectator*. In her website's "Bio" section, under the heading "Bookings and Appearances," Chideya even provides the number of her booking agent. "I am available to give speeches at college campuses and corporations," she tells bewildered propeller-heads. "To inquire about or book a lecture please call Ellie Deegan at K & S Speakers: 1-800-762-4234."

Chideya may well be sincere in her "mission" to combat racism in the news, but she can't be oblivious to the fact that the best way to get the media's attention is to attack it. Shortly after *Don't Believe the Hype* appeared, Chideya was recruited by CNN to be part of its "Gen X Team," commenting on the 1996 presidential campaign and she now works for

Why men prefer to express themselves through fiction: "The [male] artist is a fantasy achiever. Moving his troops around on paper, he achieves in fantasy what he could achieve in no other way: honour, power, riches and the love of women."

—Germaine Greer



GERMAINE GREER:
(left) Confessional nonfiction: yes.
Harvard grad: no.

FARAI CHIDEYA:
(below) hunting for cultural misinformation backstage at a Phish concert.



ABC. The attitude of men like ABC News chief Rooney Arledge, to paraphrase Lyndon Johnson, may well be that it's better to have people like Chideya on the inside pissing out, than on the outside pissing in.

LIKE THE OTHER HARVARD WRITERS OF HER GENERATION, Chideya's attitude to the media-industrial complex is schizophrenic: on the one hand, it's responsible for a great deal of what's wrong with our society; on the other, it's their ticket to fame and fortune. In their books, these writers trot out the standard complaints about our media-saturated culture, the way it dumbs everything down to the level of a crude, simple-minded morality play, that kind of thing. Yet they also crave the fame, the riches, the instant authority, that being a media darling can bring them.

Ironically, if the media's reaction to complex problems weren't so black and white, if its response to issues like depressive illness, date rape, and racism were more measured, writers like Wurtzel, Roiphe and Chideya wouldn't get so much attention. It's only because of the media's relentless tendency to personalize everything, to cover every issue by assembling a collage of soundbites from various colorful individuals, that these authors have been so successful. They've each staked a claim to a hot-button issue and whenever some wretched hack on deadline needs a quote on the subject, they're the people to call.

Ultimately, the really disheartening aspect of their success isn't that they're such naked opportunists—quite literally, in Elizabeth Wurtzel's case—or such shameless narcissists. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, after all, suffered from both those faults but his *Confessions* are pretty entertaining nevertheless. The really depressing thing is that they're so mediocre. The only stand-out among the Harvard school of non-fiction writers is Susan Faludi, a 37-year old graduate who is at least a decent reporter, thanks to a stint at the *Wall Street Journal*, and doesn't rely solely on personal reminiscences to corroborate her thesis. As for the rest, they really should wait a while before publishing any more volumes of their diaries.

Towards the end of researching this piece—having read a total of nine books—I happened to reread Tom Wolfe's *Radical Chic*. The effect was similar to diving into a pool in the Hamptons after a nerve-fraying, six-hour crawl up the LIE. It was like the soothing balm Laurence Olivier offers Dustin Hoffman in *Marathon Man* after torturing him with a dentist's drill for hours on end, exposing the nerves in his teeth. Staring at this pile of books, the prospect of ever having to reread them filled me with terror. I have to tell you, if Olivier was standing in front of me, holding *Radical Chic* in one hand and *Prozac Nation* in the other, asking "Is it safe?", if I knew the answer, I'd give it up in a New York minute. ■



NAOMI WOLF:
the author of *The Beauty Myth* wonders what to wear.

"Why did I write it down? In order to remember it, of course, but what exactly was it I wanted to remember? How much of it actually happened? Did any of it? Why do I keep a notebook at all? It is easy to deceive oneself on all these scores. The impulse to write things down is a peculiarly compulsive one, inexplicable to those who do not share it, useful only accidentally, only secondarily, in the way that any compulsion tries to justify itself ... Keepers of private notebooks are ... anxious malcontents, children afflicted apparently at birth with some presentiment of loss.

—Joan Didion

The League of "— Nations"

Much as one can't help but feel sorry for the early pioneers of the NBA, who would have all made \$25 million a year had they only been born a few decades later, those women who first came up with compulsive, confessional female prose got stifled as well. We can only dream of what might have been.

Virginia Woolf: Lighthouse Nation. How an entire generation of young women keep going on seaside vacations with this strange, uncommunicative freak of a man, and what we as a society should be doing about it.

Emily Dickinson: M-Dash Nation. With rollicking personal anecdotes of this exciting new way of writing—hysterically stabbing one's pen at the paper whenever one feels like it—Dickinson opens a window on a fresh new world of people, places and things literally at the crossroads of communication. As a member of this new breed might put it: "The Future—is now."

Anais Nin: The Final Glass of Absinthe. The last thirty years have seen a massive increase in the number of young women who find themselves having sex on a nightly basis with tortured young artists who have beautiful penises. What can we, as a society, do to stop their boring banker husbands from finding out?

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MARY'S : BLOOMINGDALE'S

ROGUE again?



How on God's green earth can a once-great magazine compete in the groovy and ironic late nineties?

No, seriously. Like, what *is* going on?

THERE ARE FEW

secondi piatti in the underlit Italian restaurant of American publishing—and even fewer *dolci*. Once a magazine has enjoyed its bite of the cherry—once it has captured the zeitgeist, stormed the public consciousness, and attained near-biblical status in the eyes of its readership—rarely, as it were, does it get a second bite of the cherry. Not that publications don't try to engineer their own comebacks—they do so all the time. *Esquire* is making a new pitch for the big time under spunky new editor David Granger. *Time* magazine is running a fresh new vibe up the flagpole to see who tries to burn it. Even *Playboy* is taking steps to reclaim its former relevance.

But what about the granddaddy of them all? What about *Rogue*? Does anybody even remember *Rogue*, the super-literate style manual of the early sixties that set the tone and primed the pump for publishing megaliths such as *Esquire* and *GQ*? No less a figure than *Vanity Fair*'s Graydon Carter hailed *Rogue* as a major influence on his career during his acceptance speech as Magazine Editor of the Year. And moments later found himself gazing down upon an audience whose unanimously blank expressions called nothing to mind so much as those vast arrays of solar panels they have all over New Mexico.

In fact, the only other person to go on record recently as having any recollection at all of *Rogue*'s one-time magnificence is a shaven-headed 41 year-old man called Michael Sedgwick, who happens to be its new editor.

It was Sedgwick, after all, bitter and opportunistic after his 12 years as the strangely male executive editor of *YM* ended in dismissal, who found himself last July sharing a Miami elevator with rubber-faced Australian tycoon Rupert Murdoch. To hear Sedgwick tell the story, Murdoch became entranced by Sedgwick's outsized "triple-sensor" wristwatch and

(left) One part hubris. One part self-referential irony. One part appallingly bad judgement. Sedgwick's own face adorns the inaugural cover of the new *Rogue*.

ROGUE

JANUARY, 1998

Who'S MAKing What?

Our Reader's
Poll Results Are In

Put YouR
MonEy
WHere
Your Halr
WAS

HarRison
FoRd:
Man or
Superman?



made him an immediate offer of \$150 for watch, presentation case, and instruction manual. Though Sedgwick declined, the two men fell to talking, and within an hour Sedgwick had a new job. His mission: to come up with a prospectus, business plan, and editorial vision for a new glossy men's magazine to compete directly with *Maxim*, *P.O.V.*, *Esquire*, et al.

By cellphone the next day, however, Sedgwick told his new boss he had an even better idea: why not start an old magazine? Rather than join the throng of titles in a Hobbesian jostle at the starting line, he argued, Murdoch's millions would be far better spent on a magazine that already had a head-start, a magazine like *Rogue*. "When push came to shove," Sedgwick explained to Murdoch, the name recognition, however pathetic, of *Rogue* would give them the edge they needed to be competitive. Murdoch's tentative approval was secured and, after a few days of long-distance budget discussions with the bank that owned the *Rogue* name, Sedgwick got his green light, to the tune of ten million dollars.

Sources close to Sedgwick say he knows how much he has gotten away with. Whatever "when push comes to shove" means to him, he knows as well as anyone else that *Rogue*'s name counts for nothing—but he doesn't care. After more than a decade advising teenage girls not to stuff their bras with toilet paper, Sedgwick apparently feels the time has come for him to make his splash in the grown-up magazine world. "Michael has absolutely no doubt that he can make *Rogue* successful," one recently hired staffer told SPY. "He's convinced he has the entire nineties publishing culture figured, and he thinks he's found the chink in its armor." That chink—something of an open secret within the minimalist downtown offices of *Rogue*—is *irony*. According to Sedgwick's oft-repeated credo, all a magazine needs to be successful in the modern era is a shimmering patina of wacky, cynical playfulness. Once you have *that*, one staffer remembers being told by Sedgwick recently, you have it all.

IF YOU CAN REMEMBER ROGUE IN THE SIXTIES THEN YOU WEREN'T REALLY READING IT

As any amateur physicist will testify, the falls that really hurt you are the ones you start when you're unusually high in the air. And in the early-psychedelic heady airspace of the mid- to late-sixties, nothing flew closer to the sun than *Rogue*.

Under the trademark red suspenders of legendary editor Stem Kerchner—honestly!—*Rogue* set the scene for a number of titles to which history has been kind. Kerchner's *Rogue* introduced the world to the idea that a magazine for men could be about more than just breasts and the obscure, basically apocryphal practice of "swinging." Magazines, according to the Kerchner credo, could be about golf and boxing as well. With some of the biggest names in misogynist American prose at his disposal, the famously eclectic Kerchner used the lime-green Osterizer of the early sixties to churn a super-smooth cocktail of polo-necks and NASA-designed nine-irons that caused a publishing tsunami. A single issue might find Vladimir Nabokov on the art of punching someone in the face, and Norman Mailer's diary of trying to make the cut at the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow.

"Stem would call you into his office to chew you out," recalls one staffer. "But he'd immediately lose his thread and be up on his desk demonstrating the Iriquois dance of love, or the way T.S. Eliot liked to lean his slices of toast against each other to cool them off. Ideas were like ants to him. And *Rogue* was his beloved ant farm where he nurtured the ants and could show them off to his friends." Kerchner's enthusiasm was contagious, and everyone who was anyone wanted to be part of the action, recalls Vum Nordner (that's an odd name!), *Rogue*'s literary editor from 1962 to 1995. "Betty Freidan, you know, would stop by the office with a casserole," recalls Nordner. "Or Tom Wolfe would huff up the stairs with the phrase 'Sexual Revolution' written on a napkin and we'd sit around with a bottle of Aquavit trying to work out how to slip it into the magazine."

While the rest of the world was making soundless super eight movies of their gorgeous

wives wearing stripy miniskirts in the back yard, Kerchner and his New York coterie were busy turning *Rogue* from a small-circulation literary pamphlet into a newstand colossus. The writing was fresh and unashamedly literary; the covers were striking and iconic—July, 1963's cover, for instance, depicted a glistening Arnold Palmer emerging naked from the belly of a whale. Rather than be fazed by the social chaos of the times, Kerchners thrived on its eclecticism.

Eventually, perhaps inevitably, Kerchner's teeming reptile brain forced him to seek out new challenges. At the

height of his success, Kerchner sold his stock in *Rogue* and ploughed the resulting millions into the launch of *New York Insider*, an over-size monthly that was beautifully designed but stubbornly themed around an ongoing, weekly-updated survey of Manhattan's dwindling array of automatons. *Rogue*'s stubborn, unwavering pilgrimage to the dead-spot beneath the piece of chewed

gum on the media radar scope was fully underway.

TROUSERS AND ERRORS

If you ask Michael Sedgwick—as everyone inevitably does—where *Rogue* has been over the last 20 years, the corners of his mouth will start to whiten. After allowing you a decent interval in which to retract your question, during which time he will have undone and refastened the belt of his pants, he will invariably reply, "Where the fuck have you been, you fuck?" prior to waddling off in disgust.

The truth however—and this, perhaps, is where this article begins to get a little less believable—is that where *Rogue* has been is the murky mathematical bottom of Lake Circulation, selling an unimpressive average of four copies in its



traditional stronghold of the metropolitan Northeast, and an additional nine in the remaining states and U.S. territories, not including Guam.

The first editorial meeting of the new *Rogue* convened on May 4, 1997, at Sedgwick's sprawling pied-à-terre in Tribeca. Thirty or so of the biggest names in publishing helped themselves to a cooler full of Diet Snapple and watched guardedly as an animated Sedgwick strode back and forth between an array of large, ominous, two-dimensional rectangles draped in muted navy dustsheets. After speaking abstractly for a few minutes—on such disparate topics as birth, gravity, and fate—Sedgwick, without warning, whipped the dust sheet off a massive 6' x 3' facsimile check for ten million dollars of Rupert Murdoch's money. *Rogue* magazine, Sedgwick announced, was officially back, and everyone in attendance was, as of that very moment, offered a salary increase of 15% to help Sedgwick pursue his inspired vision for how *Rogue* would set the world on fire again: as an up-market, American version of the British "lad" magazine, *Trousers!*.

To a crowd of magazine lifers, *Trousers!* needed no introduction. The irreverent British publishing sensation, with its unashamed resolution of pop culture between the concrete axes of extra-strength lager and massive, golden frankentits, was in the process of changing men's magazines. Men were more confident in their maleness than ever before, ran the theory behind *Trousers!*, and no longer needed their pornography to be swaddled between pious articles on the mafia and interviews with Charles Barkley. If executed with the right combination of exuberance and verve, the aforementioned marmarities could take their natural place alongside all other timeless aspects of masculine bad behavior: binge-drinking, soccer-hooliganism, dressing badly, and smoking cigarettes to the point of nausea. This, ranted Sedgwick, was an idea whose time had come.

As if on cue, a group of busty models at this point emerged from Sedgwick's guest bathroom area and whisked away the remaining dust-sheets. From a series of large cardboard mock-ups of *Rogue* covers, beamed Sedgwick's own face and head, manically distorted in ironic, debauched abandon. At the conclusion

INTER-OFFICE MEMO

TO: ALL

FROM: Michael Sedgwick

ROGUE # 464: Additions to Lineup as of 9/21/97

ROGUE:

NEW BALDNESS CURES; Nerf Guns for Cubicle Warfare; Travel Irons; Keychains that Can Surf the Web

ARTICLE:

"LINDA FIORENTINO, MAKING IT LOOK EASY" by Derek Reid.

When Derek makes it back down from Cloud Nine, can someone thank him for a great piece? It's a dirty job, Derek, but somebody has to do it! As I'm sure a certain Donna Reid will not be agreeing!!!!!!

SPOOF ARTICLE:

"DANIEL R. KEYBORDE, THE COOLEST, MOST FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD ACTOR IN THE UNIVERSE!" by Danny Murphy

First, I just want to say thank you to everyone. Without you—every single one of you—I don't think I would have the courage to run an article like this. Nothing like this has ever been attempted in the entire history of *ROGUE*—and I think we should be prepared for the fact that a lot of people are going to be taken in by this article, and feel that we've betrayed their trust. But we have made a commitment to the use of ironic devices (in moderation!) and I think it will pay off. When you receive this memo, I want all of you—even Philip!!!—to turn turn to each other and quietly say the words, "we are doing something." I firmly believe that this is the piece that's going to tell the world that *ROGUE* is back, that we're a breed apart from all the fashion-tips-and-puff-piece magazines. At very least, it's just as good as those spoof articles *Esquire* and *GQ* did. I love you all.

ARTICLE:

"George Clooney Rules The World!"

Three cheers for Karen! The "skinny" on ol' Dr. Batman is something many people (like yours truly!) have been waiting for a long long while. Thanks for taking us behind the surgical mask and giving us the real George Clooney. The one who plays golf.

BACKPAGE ROGUE:

Tony Hendra mourns the fall from vogue of women's pantyhose.

Biologist "Bottles" Sex-Appeal

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upcoming medical textbook for physicians. Her 1986 co-discovery of human pheromones was reported in *TIME* (12/1/86); *NEWSWEEK* (1/12/87); and a front page story in



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the WASHINGTON POST newspaper (11/18/86).

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of the meeting, some half-hour later, approximately 15 people agreed to join Sedgwick's team—with the explicit understanding that his face never appear on the actual magazine cover, and that he forget the whole *Trousers!* model of publishing because this was America and people didn't get a kick out of pretending they had no money.

According to already disgruntled sources within the fledgling *Rogue* editorial staff, these issues of newstrand positioning have become an all-consuming obsession for Sedgwick as the countdown to *Rogue*'s relaunch continues—on at least one occasion, quite literally. A sticky evening in late August found Sedgwick walking home from a boozy planning session with his editors when he stopped by Tony's World Famous Newsstand in Manhattan for inspiration. Surveying the arithmetic proliferation of new men's titles, Sedgwick—according to witnesses—became distraught prior to backing, Ron Goldman style, into a rack of Italian *Vogue Bambini*, where he lay writhing for a good half-minute before being levered out by a passersby. His palatial office is apparently littered with dictionaries, spanking new copies of Sophocles tragedies, and old Monty Python tapes as Sedgwick burns the candle at both ends trying to ironize his magazine before it's too late.

THE IRONY GUYS

Sedgwick's widely lauded next move was to hire, in his own words, "an irony guy," in the shape of Nick Spooner, the impish, 20-something editor of Seattle-based title *Hmmm*. With a steady output of memorable features such as "I'm Only Typing This Headline Because, You Know, It Would Be Weird If an Article Didn't Have a Headline" and its legendary 1996 issue, "The Issue Issue," *Hmmm* used what could perhaps in the broadest sense be referred to as "irony" to attract major attention from the mainstream publishing industry. Nevertheless, when *Hmmm* folded, men's magazines, greedy for a modular dose of groovy self-referentiality, fell over themselves to hire *Hmmm* staffers. Nick Mason went off to lend an air of detachment to the record reviews in *The Source*; Zake Gogol to plumb the quirky side of the modern workplace in the famously tedious *J.O.B.*; and Satan Blorg was snapped up by *Guns 'n' Ammo* to write a monthly column, entitled "Shooting Ourselves in the Foot."

According to sources, Spooner's tenure at *Rogue* got off to a rocky start. Discomfited enough by the personal implications of entering a Manhattan office building before noon in the first place, Spooner's inaugural morning turned blacker still when he scooted into his office. A pathetically grateful Sedgwick had straightfacedly commissioned a nameplate for his door reading "Nick Spooner, Editor in Charge of Irony." Decrying his new title as "just some kind of ridiculous bullshit," the goateed westcoaster staunchly refused to remove both feet from his skateboard until an engraver had been sent for to correct the damage. There in the newly painted corridors of *Rogue*, a humble artisan with chisel and hammer conferred upon Spooner, with Sedgwick's helpless approval, the lofty, de facto title of "Nameplates are Overrated Blah Blah Blah."

IT'S A SPOOF! IT'S A SPOOF!

It should be pointed out, of course, that by this point the article you are reading has jettisoned the last ounce of its credibility—but no matter. Thus appeased, the soft-spoken Spooner wasted no time making his presence felt. At his first editorial meeting, the mercurial young firebrand casually declared—as he casually brushed sand off the soles of his feet—that the simplest way of establishing an ironic presence was to run a spoof article. "What's a spoof?" asked Sedgwick, visibly foaming with excitement. "You mean a parody, like *Playboy* did of *Men's Health*?" "No," replied Spooner, "a spoof. A fake article indistinguishable from the other articles in the magazine that signals to the reader that

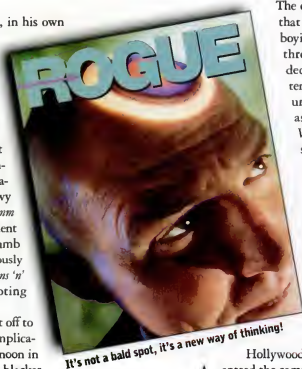
you have at least some level of self-knowledge about how cheesy you are in general. Even if you don't."

The suggestion met with general approval and an intern was duly dispatched to leaf through old copies of SPY Magazine, looking for seasoned satirists to execute the spoof. The "pickin's," as they say, were dreadfully slim. Larry Doyle had commitments in Hollywood, "punching up" scripts for the ninth season of *Saved By the Bell*; Joe Queenan had several appearances on *Politically Incorrect* to prep for as well as the final volume of his memoirs, *Well, If You Ask Me...and I Could Have Sworn Somebody Did!* to complete.

The only available name was that of Danny Murphy, the boyish, silver-haired misanthrope responsible, in the decades since his SPY tenure, for such classic volumes of contrarian humor as: *Cheesburger is a Vegetable* and the best-selling *I'd Love to Have Dinner...But First I'm Having Lunch With My Lawyer!* Over lunch at Balhazar, Murphy set out his requirements. He would only consent to execute the spoof article—possibly, and this was just off the top of his head, a profile of a fictitious

Hollywood actor?—if he was guaranteed the complete co-operation of the *Rogue* art department in whipping up fake movie posters and the like. A meeting with the staffers in charge of headlines and table-of-contents copy would also have to be scheduled within the week, so that Murphy could brief them on the noble art of laying clues for readers, gently letting the cleverer ones in on the fact that one of the articles was in fact aphony.

For Sedgwick, these were small potatoes. As long as *Rogue* would be able to pump out puff-piece after puff-piece and still be considered "ironic" in the eyes of the world, no price was too high. He reached below the table and produced a tiny bag containing \$5 billion in cash and at this point the whole thing sort of breaks down. Hi mom!)



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MY DREAM LUNCH WITH MARIAH CAREY'S EX-EMPLOYEE. HIS

NAME IS "ALEX," AND HE'S PRETTY STEAMED. BY CARA DAVID



MARIAH CAREY

Despite a string of strategic duets with rappers like Puff Daddy and Ol' Dirty Bastard, the multi-record-selling singer of "Dreamlover" and "Fantasy" has never had the respect of the hip-hop generation. But who knew she was also something of a cow to work for.

So, you were an employee of Mariah Carey?

Not really. I was actually an employee of Sony music. But everyone who was an employee of Mariah was paid by Sony, so it was like I was an employee of Mariah's.

What was it like working for Mariah?

Working with her it was always a question of being very careful in everything you did—everything had to be perfect for "The Queen." It was like living in fear. It was a reign of terror.

Like how?

One time I had to get Mariah's dinner for her. I was sent to some nice Italian restaurant. And, as I was carrying it back, I realized that I was holding it sideways, and I might have mushed it a little bit. And with all the frings going on, I really didn't want to deal with that situation. So I went up to the room where they take care of the catering, and I said I had the food. And they said, "Oh yeah, just take it into Studio C." And I said that I really didn't want to do that, and they said, "Come on, just bring it in! It's no big deal!" And I absolutely refused, and so one of the women had to bring it in. And she got completely balled out.

Do you know what food it was you picked up from the Italian restaurant?

Um, I think it was bow-tie pasta in garlic sauce with salmon, and then there was another time when it was a caesar salad and tuna carpaccio.

Was there any visible evidence of seepage?

No, not really. But it was one of those tin foil containers with a plastic top, and the food was smushed up against the plastic. And so there was evidence that the dish had been upside down.

Do you think in any subconscious sense you were attempting to "mush" Mariah's food?

Definitely not. I was totally afraid that I might lose my job and I was specifically afraid of doing anything like turning the bag upside down or anything.

So how did the food end up upside down?

When they gave me the bag at the restaurant, it

was like...I didn't know the orientation of the dish in the bag...

So it was the restaurant's fault?

No, no, it was my fault.

Have you ever considered that maybe the majority of geniuses are anal perfectionists à la Mariah Carey?

No, not at all. Anyway, she isn't a genius. Do you mean the fact that she multi-tracks everything and listens to each voice a million times?...I think there's an element of striving for perfection that's totally a part of being a genius, but working so hard, I think, suggests she's not a genius. Busting everyone's butt...I don't think she's that great a singer. She's just what they call a studio rat. She spends all of this time in the studio, listening to the different tracks again and again until each word is the best it can possibly be, but it doesn't work in her live shows. She's not that great a live singer. She's just pastiche editing and fantasy.

Who's cooler, you or Mariah Carey?

Me, definitely. Mariah has everything and lives in this total fantasy world. But it's made her a bossy prima donna.

On a scale of one to ten, how disgruntled are you?

Eight, but that has much more to do with the Sony environment in general. You're not a human being when there's a superstar nearby. You're just incredibly small; you're a nothingness of nothing. It's all about the superstar; it's all about Mariah. You don't matter. And I guess that made me feel really pretty disgruntled.

What are you wearing?

Calvin Klein wool pants and a white Banana Republic cotton collar shirt. Blue socks from the Gap. Jenny B shoes.

Thanks for taking the time to share your experiences with us.

Not at all. As cheesy as it sounds, it actually feels good to finally talk about it.

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